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Essays on Strategy

Essays on Strategy

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Selections from the 1985 Joint Chiefs of Staff Essay Competition

1986

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FOREWORD

In 1982, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff sponsored the first JCS Strategy Essay Competition, challenging students at our Senior Service Schools to write innovatively about issues of national security. The students met the challenge well, and have continued to do so in each year's competition, examining old problems from new perspectives, raising new questions, proffering solutions.

This book contains four essays that won recognition in the 1985 competition. Lawrence P. Taylor, US Department of State, presents an approach to combatting international terrorism against US embassies and diplomatic personnel. Colonel Voy J. Nicholson, US Air Force, and Lieutenant Colonel Charles T. Robertson, Jr., US Air Force, suggest what the recent debate between the Soviet military and the Politburo may mean for Soviet policy. Lieutenant Colonel D. A. Richwine, US Marine Corps, examines implications for the United States—particularly for the US Navy—of the Soviets' construction of their first full-size aircraft carrier. Lieutenant Colonel L. D.

Holder, US Army, reviews the history of "operational art" to consider its future in the US Army.

The National Defense University once again supervised the JCS essay competition, and is please to publish these selections which imaginatively address topics of military, diplomatic, and political importance.

Richard D. Lawrence

Richard D. Lawrence
Lieutenant General, US Army
President, National Defense
University

Essays
on Strategy

1

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND US DIPLOMACY

Putting the Genie Back Into the Bottle

by

Lawrence P. Taylor

Lawrence P. Taylor, US Department of State, is a Class 1 Foreign Service Officer and a State Department specialist on international energy policy and the geopolitics of oil and gas. He is a 1985 graduate of the National War College.

International terrorism, especially that sponsored and supported by nations, is a growing threat to US national security. Terrorist attacks on US embassies are the cutting edge of a broader pattern of low-level terrorist violence directed at Western democratic institutions. Unless checked, terrorism will continue to increase and could seriously damage US foreign policy interests. The world has lost a sense of what are acceptable acts in the pursuit of political purposes or the rectification of political grievances. The intellectual confusion in which hideous acts of violence against innocent people are justified on the basis of their being performed in pursuit of noble political goals leaves the world community divided and insufficiently active on the issue of controlling terrorism.

TERRORISM TODAY

In gauging the nature and degree of the contemporary terrorist threat to US foreign policy and to US embassies, several factors merit special recognition:

- State sponsored terrorism, in which third party nations, as part of their foreign policies, control the terrorist acts, is growing. Brian Jenkins of the Rand Corporation calls this "surrogate warfare." It is cost effective, it can be plausibly denied, and it avoids the risks of conventional warfare. Terrorism is no longer necessarily the "weapon of the weak"; instead, it has become one of several tools a state can use synergistically in pursuit of foreign policy goals. Syria effectively used this type of terrorism as part of its policy to force the United States out of Lebanon in 1983–84 and reassert its own influence over that country. State sponsorship changes terrorism in two very troubling ways: it causes terrorism to take qualitative leaps in sophistication of violence and in staying power; and it increases the potential utility of terrorism, allowing terrorist acts to work in combination with a nation's other tools of foreign policy.

- A virtual international terrorist industry has developed since the mid-1960s. This "industry" provides training sites, expert instruction in the use of modern weapons, financial support, organizational assistance in planning terrorist acts, and safe havens. Major terrorist support networks now exist in Libya, South Yemen, Syria, and Iran, and in some Soviet bloc nations, particularly North Korea.

- Shi'ite terrorism has emerged in Iran and Lebanon, and could spread throughout the Middle East. Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin warns that the Shi'ite phenomenon creates "the potential for a kind of terrorism that we have not yet experienced."[1] Iranian sponsored terrorist attacks against US embassies and diplomats are particularly worrisome because of their fanatical nature. These terrorists apparently are willing to commit suicide to achieve their purpose in pursuit of Iran's strategic goal, which appears to be to force the United States out of the Middle East.

- Numerous "mom and pop" terrorist units have formed in the Middle East. These units are based on family and kinship ties that are difficult to identify, making the units almost impossible to penetrate. Larger groups are forming small operational cells with some of the same characteristics of secrecy.

- Lack of effective US response to a series of past terrorist acts may be a powerful stimulus for further attacks, especially against US embassies.[2] A foreign diplomat I interviewed emphasized that the only logical conclusion terrorists could draw from the last six years is that they run no risk of punishment for taking US diplomats hostage, burning or bombing US embassies, or murdering US diplomats.

THE THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES

Media coverage is a powerful magnifier of terrorist acts and the symbols terrorists manipulate. The possibility of intense media coverage may also inhibit the US government's response to terrorist acts, such as use of the military, for fear of turning the situation into a TV spectacle that can only benefit the terrorists. Terrorism that relies on media coverage to communicate its political message [illegible] increasingly [illegible] tion [illegible] are [illegible] such as the seizure of [illegible] personnel in Tehran and the bombing of the US Marine barracks in Beirut.[3]

US policy must recognize that "the popularity of terrorism has been growing because it works—not all the time, but often enough. In the gamble of human affairs, it is a relatively good bet."[4] Terrorism can achieve its purposes directly through acts of violence. More often, though, it "achieves its goals not through its acts but through the response to its acts."[5] This second means of terrorist success is the aspect of some terrorist strategies that governments ignore—to their peril—in formulating counterterrorism policies.

The Algerian Revolution against the French in the 1950s is a study in terrorism that worked because of an understandable but miscalculated response by French authorities. The Muslim population being apathetic toward the Algerian independence movement, the French claim that Algeria was an integral part of France seemed sufficiently credible to maintain public control. But a terrorist campaign of bombing public facilities and transportation changed that balance of support. The French reacted to the bombings by using better trained French troops in place of loyal Algerians and by arresting Algerians indiscriminately in an effort to find and neutralize the terrorists. This response showed the Algerian population that they were, in fact, to be treated as "colonials" and that they did not enjoy equal status with the French. "Thus the French conceded the issue of the war at its very outset . . . even though the FLN (National Liberation Front) had written the script, the French . . . went ahead to play the role for which they had been cast."[6]

[illegible] many [illegible] should [illegible]. Yet attacks on US [illegible] for a substantial [illegible] terrorist incidents [illegible] killed in international [illegible].[7] (Although this [illegible] figure may be [illegible] by the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, the point that American persons or property are a priority target for terrorists is valid.) More specifically, diplomats have become the prime targets of international terrorism over the past ten years. In 1975, 30 percent of all international terrorist attacks were directed against diplomats; the proportion increased to 54 percent in 1980 and has remained at that level for the last three years.[8] Moreover, attacks on diplomats are becoming increasingly violent, perhaps as experience indicates it is "safe" to kill them.

US embassies and diplomatic staffs are primary targets of international terrorists because of their high symbolic value in the media and because successful attacks against them might force changes in US foreign policy. The message for US counterterrorism planners is clear as far as US diplomats and embassies are concerned—*the terrorist genie is out of the bottle.* The policy question is, can it be put back in?

US COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY AND PROGRAMS

The US government has been slow to respond to international [illegible] have been fo[illegible] [illegible] Th[illegible] US gov[illegible] of terro[illegible], the memo[illegible] reveals slight [illegible] mainly in the [illegible] limited awareness [illegible] trends, particularly [illegible]

Although US counterterrorist programs proceeded by "fits and starts" between 1972 and 1982, some important legacies from that period remain in the larger counterterrorism effort that has been underway since

1983. These include the "no negotiation, no concessions" policy when US officials are taken hostage; the creation of Delta Force on the military side; the State Department's role as "lead agency" in the government for countering terrorist action overseas; and an interagency structure, under State Department leadership, for formulating counterterrorism policy.

The series of bombings in Beirut in 1983 and 1984 proved to be the watershed terrorist experience for the United States. Subsequent interactions between the executive branch and Congress have significantly increased resources for and the priority given to US counterterrorism programs. The staff and responsibilities of the State Department's counterterrorism office have increased. In particular, the office's programs of Embassy Emergency Planning and providing counterterrorism training to foreign officials are important new efforts that fit well into the strategy I will suggest in this essay. Additionally, Congress provided resources to construct new [illegible] threat locations and to [illegible] others. The Beirut [illegible] government across [illegible] threat of terrorism. [illegible] Department, and the [illegible] veloping new proposals [illegible] first time since 1972, US [illegible] an upswing.

In [illegible] Shultz formed a commission, [illegible] (retired) Bobby Inman, to evaluate [illegible] abroad. The commission is to [illegible] report to Secretary Shultz in February or March of 1985, which will set the stage for further analysis and a final report, including long-term policy proposals, later in 1985. The commission has agreed to work with Congress and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to assist in implementing its proposals after making its report. Many hope the commission's final report will help to develop a political consensus for a comprehensive policy and program response to the terrorist threat.

Despite recent efforts, though, the United States still lacks a credible *strategy* of counterterrorism, particularly against state sponsored terrorism. We seem to expect that increasing the number of our tactical and defensive responses will be sufficient to deal with the problem. This is a chancy approach that puts American personnel and US foreign policy unnecessarily at risk in many regions of the world. This approach also is flawed by "preventing the last attack" thinking, in the way the military has sometimes planned to "win the last war." Instead, US policymakers should be looking at the trends of increasingly violent attacks on US embassies and state sponsored terrorism. The task is to anticipate future terrorist acts, which may be more dangerous and varied in tactics than those of the past, and to develop an effective strategy to deter them.

LOOKING AT THE THREAT STRATEGICALLY

In thinking about an appropriate strategy to counter terrorism against US embassies, US planners should consider the following points about the threat:

- Attacks against embassies and diplomatic staffs such as the hostage taking in Tehran and the bombing in Beirut are virtually certain to occur in the future. They have been demonstrated to be successful. Even if this were the only threat, our current set of policies is probably not adequate to deal with it.[10]

- "The ultimate tragedies at embassies are prospective but potentially real."[11] Terrorists could paralyze the entire US foreign policy establishment by systematically attacking dependents of embassy officers or seizing American schools overseas. As we "harden" embassies, are we making an attack on a school more probable?

- There is now a close relationship between US foreign policy interests and the security of US diplomatic personnel. Further successful attacks against the United States in the Middle East could make US policy in the region more difficult to sustain. Additionally, continuing to absorb terrorist attacks without developing a visibly effective deterrent or reaction works to undermine general perceptions of US credibility and power.

- State sponsored terrorist threats to US embassies are the cutting edge of a broader pattern of low-level violence directed at Western democratic institutions. These threats are a strategic challenge to US values, policies, and global leadership. Claude Cheyssin, a former French Foreign Minister, draws a clear link between international terrorism and a grand strategy masterminded abroad:

> Terrorism is the most efficient method of destabilizing a democracy. This encouragement of terrorism by totalitarian regimes is clear, just as the encouragement by democratic countries of human rights and freedom of expression in totalitarian regimes is clear.[12]

- The level and intensity of terrorist acts have no natural limits; indeed, terrorism is propelled toward ever more spectacular acts in order to attract world media attention. Unless checked, terrorism could run amok—at a minimum, "Ulsterizing" a sizeable portion of the world community. In the worst case, given the economic vulnerabilities of modern industrial societies and the sophisticated technologies of violence available to terrorists, terrorism could eventually threaten large populations, even with credible threats to use chemicals or biological toxins.[13]

- A carefully crafted US counterterrorism strategy needs to be thought through *now*. We cannot afford ad hoc responses that mistakenly play into our enemies' hands and actually work against US interests—à la the French response in Algeria. Political tolerance in Washington for terrorism is declining as the intensity of terrorism is increasing. We are on a collision course, but we need to look and think before we leap.[14]

- Finally, the United States needs a strategy to avoid simply directing terrorist attacks away from newly "hardened" embassies and toward less protected embassies or private citizens and businesses. Our strategy must aim at controlling the general terrorist phenomenon, not only its current thrust.

To protect American lives and US foreign policy objectives, the US government must develop a consensus on the nature of the international terrorist threat and craft an appropriate US strategy to meet that threat.

COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY: A FULL COURT PRESS

There will be no quick fix that eliminates the terrorist threat to US foreign policy interests. Instead, we should adopt the strategy of a full court press (the basketball term for an aggressive defense in which the defending team applies constant pressure all over the court), applying intelligent, creative, persistent pressure on a number of fronts to check and eventually bring under reasonable control the upward spiral in international terrorism. As the basketball metaphor implies, the US government will, to some extent, always be on the defensive against terrorists. But an aggressive, active set of policies can frustrate the terrorists and make states think twice about sponsoring terrorism. Frankly, this strategy will make only incremental progress, will often be frustrating, and will make heavy demands on the professionalism of the US foreign service. It equates to using small group patrols to counter low-level guerrilla insurgency—it's not spectacular, but over time it works.

The President and Secretary of State are providing strong leadership on the issue. They assign high priority to protecting US embassies and deterring terrorism. Congress has provided substantial funding to current counterterrorism efforts, and key members have indicated a willingness to support increased funding for further programs.[15] In this respect, persuasive counterterrorism proposals enjoy a singularly favorable status within a Washington dominated by budget cutting.

The biggest question about the "full court press" is how the State Department will respond. The strategy requires adjustments in the behavior and attitudes of the foreign service professionals. The foreign service has prospered because of the dedication and brilliance of its individual officers on foreign policy issues; but it has a spotty record of professional management and a tradition of regarding security procedures at embassies as nuisances that interfere with diplomacy.[16] In Washington, the State Department must demonstrate that it can *lead* the government counterterrorist program, not simply coordinate meetings and paper flow within the Washington bureaucracy.

The remainder of this essay suggests key points in the strategy of the full court press. These include programs, organizational changes, a special role for the State Department, and management of US military force within the strategy. It is important that US counterterrorism strategy include some programs that improve defenses against terrorism and others deliberately structured to influence the nations that sponsor terrorism.

Additional Program and Policy Suggestions

Recent government efforts have helped, but we are still a long way from succeeding in the struggle against terrorism. We need to go further with more new counterterrorism policies and programs.

- Bilateral diplomacy, multilateral cooperation, and multilateral sanctions deserve more emphasis, despite their limited effect in the past. These are the areas in which more consistent pressure and hard work can pay small dividends that add up over time. The London Summit in June 1984 suggested coordinating more closely between national security organizations, placing embargoes on weapons shipments to states supporting terrorism, defining diplomatic immunity more narrowly, and excluding from within national boundaries known terrorists, including people with diplomatic status, and pursuing other measures, including economic boycotts. These suggestions deserve our close attention.

- US intelligence needs greater resources in order to give the needed priority to counterterrorism activities. Areas that especially deserve greater attention are "human intelligence" and the penetration of terrorist groups and governments that support terrorism. What the intelligence community must provide is good tactical intelligence—like police intelligence—that can specifically identify threats, targets, plans, and times of attack. US intelligence agencies also must learn to share information quickly and completely rather than guarding it within individual agencies, as is traditional. However, despite cliches about good intelligence being the core of effective counterterrorism,[17] we must realize that better intelligence will not do as much as we need or would like against the current pattern and structure of terrorism.

Indeed, one of the myths of counterterrorism planning is that the problem can be solved by covert means. We cannot produce good counterterrorism by turning over most of the job to the intelligence community.

- The State Department should add more political reporting officers in certain high threat countries to analyze those nations' political and security environments. Doing so should free up some intelligence officers, now doing that analysis, for clandestine work. It should also help establish a framework within which clandestine priorities can be better set.

- By merely breaking routines and varying patterns, embassies can inexpensively complicate terrorist planning. For example, each embassy might occasionally change its hours of operations—say, twice a week at random—opening and closing one or two hours earlier or later than normal. Through a local agreement, a host government could provide visible, large-scale police presence outside an embassy once a week on randomly chosen days. In some countries, streets around an embassy could occasionally be closed or traffic near the embassy rerouted. The potential benefits of actions such as these appear to outweigh any possible inconvenience or inefficiency in embassy performance.

- All US officials going overseas should receive better training about international terrorism, particularly about the nature of the threat, possible patterns of attack, how to respond in general, and what *not* to do in various situations. The US government should train embassy officers to a minimum standard of knowledge about weapons and communications and about the psychology and techniques of negotiation with terrorists. Lives might one day depend on whether a US official can operate communications equipment or tell whether a weapon's safety catch is on or off. Current training programs are useful but insufficient.

- The US government should express its concern with terrorism regularly—but not routinely—in high-level international meetings. This communication at diplomatic levels will support the working-level officials attempting to enhance cooperation against terrorism. It will also help lay the groundwork for further US action, such as the use of military force, that may become necessary.

- The United States can craft its foreign policy to work against terrorism. For example, the United States could try, either directly or through other friendly states, to reduce the level of cooperation between Syria and Iran, thereby lessening the potential effectiveness of Iranian sponsored terrorism.

Organizational Changes for Better Management

The US government lacks strong leadership on the issue of counterterrorism, and its experts on the subject are scattered among several agencies. Better organization and management are required if the government is to develop and implement a counterterrorist strategy.

- An Opportunity Planning Group should be formed, made up of officers from the State and Defense Departments and the intelligence community, to provide a central core of counterterrorism expertise and planning capabilities. This elite staff should work directly for an interagency counterterrorism group chaired by the State Department, developing counterterrorism plans and initiatives in the overall national interest—that is, these officers should not retain departmental biases. The Opportunity Planning Group should become the repository of government expertise on terrorism, capable of supporting all elements of the US government in terrorist crises. Its areas of expertise could include negotiation with terrorists holding hostages. In its planning, the group should focus on anticipating future terrorist incidents and being prepared to seize opportunities for setting effective counterterrorism policy in the aftermath of terrorist incidents. A properly staffed government-wide Opportunity Planning Group for counterterrorism should reduce the "in house" groups in several government agencies. Concentrating expertise and crisis support capabilities in one office may be the single most important improvement the government can make in management of counterterrorist policy.

- The State Department can tidy up the management of its embassy security programs to speed up needed improvements at oversea posts. Overlapping and sometimes competing bureaucratic structures result in delays, breakdowns, and confusion. The State Department's internal management in this area has improved over the past year, partly because of the personalities involved. But there is still room for better organizational control among the various State Department officers with security responsibilities. And such improvement must be institutionalized.

Special Role of the State Department

To be effective, counterterrorist strategy must be sustained and must be managed so that the policies and programs work synergistically. The Department of State is the "lead agency" for counterterrorism overseas; it is also the agency responsible for managing our embassies, which are high priority targets of international terrorism. Consequently, the State Department has a major role in counterterrorism. In order to play that role more effectively, the Department may need to make some difficult and expensive changes.

- The Department of State and its officers must change their attitude about the role of embassy and personnel security in US foreign policy. Present circumstances require better leadership on and accountability for embassy security. Ambassadors are traditionally selected for their foreign policy expertise; they are not necessarily expert in management or knowledgeable about security. They naturally place a high priority on maintaining good relations with the host government. The terrorist threat to US embassies is now so great that ambassadors must assign security a more realistic priority. Too often in recent years, ambassadors have refused to take prudent security measures because the measures would inhibit public access to the embassy or make the embassy look like a fortress, or because evacuating US dependents might "send the wrong signal" about US judgment of the host government's competence or otherwise embarrass the host government.[18]

- The State Department should set up special training and orientation concerning security and international terrorism for new ambassadors. All ambassadors should leave Washington with a clear understanding of the terrorist threat and the priority to be given to security in our foreign policy.

- The State Department should establish a system of accountability for embassy security, with ambassadors directly responsible for the security readiness of their posts. The Department should set minimum standards of embassy and residential security for each post, the standards varying depending on the level of threat at the different posts. The Inspector General's office should give high priority to evaluating whether embassies meet those standards.

- The Department should institutionalize a Board of Inquiry to investigate and evaluate all incidents at oversea diplomatic posts that result in deaths or substantial physical damages. This Board should both determine responsibility for any security deficiencies and draw out lessons for preventing the recurrence of such actions, reporting its findings directly to the Secretary of State.[19]

- The State Department should also modify the foreign service assignment process. At high threat posts, a "team" of a Deputy Chief of Mission, an Administrative Counselor, and a Security Officer all experienced in security management should be a high priority. The current emphasis on equity and smoothly scheduled transitions between postings may have to be decreased in favor of a sharper focus on putting "the best people in the right place at the right time."[20]

Management of Military Force

The role of US military force in counterterrorism policy is the subject of a heated debate both within and outside the government. Secretary of State Shultz framed the issue publicly in an October 1984 speech, suggesting "appropriate preventive or preemptive actions against terrorist groups before they strike" and talking of the use of US force to "retaliate" against terrorists.[21] Shultz asked for public understanding "before the fact" of the risks involved in using US military force—the potential for US citizens and innocent foreign civilians being killed, the probability of the United States being accused of illegal actions. He also warned that the standards for evidence that would trigger action might be less than we would desire.

President Reagan also has said publicly that the United States is prepared to use military force against terrorists, but has not yet done so because of the difficulties in identifying and locating the right targets. There appears to be growing approval within the US government for carrier-based air strikes against known terrorist training facilities in one or more Middle East countries if there are further bombings of US embassies in the region.

The strategy I recommend recognizes the need for the US military to prepare to strike against terrorists and their supporters, but it questions action such as air strikes against training camps. Such strikes may in fact worsen the situation, not improve it. They resemble too much our failed approach in Lebanon, where our strikes and naval bombardment led to further deterioration of our position. Such force options "delude the user into an exaggerated sense of its own power while leaving the malefactor's relationship with the rest of the world unaffected or even improved."[22] Integration of a "force option" into US counterterrorism policy demands that we maximize our chances for effective action and minimize the chances of an overreaction or misuse of force. Using force in the wrong way could draw us into a vicious cycle of escalating violence that works to our enemies' advantage.

The risks involved in the use of force go well beyond those raised by Secretary Shultz in his October 1984 speech. Perhaps the most troublesome is that we could trigger countermoves by the target nations that might include efforts to mount terrorist attacks within the United States. If this were to happen, our tactical successes in the use of military force could turn into strategic failures. Nonetheless, an effective counterterrorism strategy in the contemporary world must include appropriate military options. In the final analysis, US success in containing the terrorist threat may hinge on whether we can find ways to use force effectively against terrorists and their state sponsors.

Two principles should act as constraints in making decisions about using US military force:

- Don't undertake actions that would undercut the political stability of friendly governments. For example, what would we gain from a successful US military action in the Middle East if it jeopardized

Jordan's King Hussein or another pro-Western monarch?

- Don't undertake actions that would seriously damage our major foreign policy interests in other ways, such as by pushing Iran into taking a pro-Soviet position or into consolidating an anti-Western government in a post-Khomeini power struggle.

We might usefully begin thinking about how to manage our military options by distinguishing between *tactical* and *deterrent* uses of force; both have a role to play in US counterterrorism policy, but there is danger in mixing them. Use of force for tactical purposes is basically the application of police-style Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) capabilities to deal with or prevent terrorist acts. It also includes the use of US forces in air strikes or commando raids against terrorist bases. Since 1977, the United States has developed exceptional military capabilities for counterterrorism; the employment and management of the force, however, is often the critical variable in its effectiveness. The ability to employ a SWAT capability or larger doses of military power depends on a number of factors, including what country the terrorists are operating in, the attitude of the host government, and how effective our intelligence is. Although SWAT capabilities are designed for use primarily in foiling terrorists' plans or destroying their capabilities, using the military or police of the host country, rather than US personnel, for that kind of action is almost always preferable.

Effective use of force for tactical purposes is necessary but insufficient for controlling international terrorism. We must also consider how to manage US power to influence the states that sponsor terrorism. US counterterrorism strategy, therefore, also needs force capabilities of a deterrent nature—capabilities based on the creative integration of military expertise, psychological warfare, and political analysis.

Force for deterrent purposes is to be used primarily to put pressure on the countries that sponsor terrorism. The management and design of deterrent force should focus on actions that have high symbolic significance, project an image of US competence, and enhance US prestige—actions that will build a reputation for the effective use of power. Whereas tactical force concentrates on "proportional" use of strength to defeat specific terrorist actions or capabilities, deterrent force seeks "extra-proportional effect." Ideally, deterrent force should be used to pull off a symbolic and psychological counterterrorism "spectacular," the influence of which extends far beyond the immediate target, creating doubt about the utility of terrorism and renewed respect for US power.

This deterrent concept emphasizes the creative management of US force capabilities for maximum political and psychological effect. Sometimes, we might gain maximum effect by refraining from the use of power in situations where it could obviously be very destructive. From the terrorist point of view, the Red Brigades of Italy may have missed this kind of opportunity in their tactically brilliant, but brutal kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, Italy's most respected post–World War II politician. The murder of Moro shocked Italy into greater resistance against the terrorists. How much more effective might the Red Brigades have been in undermining Italy's shaky political cohesion if, after holding Moro captive for weeks despite one of the world's largest manhunts, they had coerced him to beg for his freedom and criticize the Italian government on video tape—and then released him as not worth killing?

A key point in considering the different types of force for counterterrorism is that force for tactical purposes is not necessarily small scale, nor is force for deterrent purposes necessarily large scale. It depends on the situation at hand and how the force capability is managed. Use of deterrent force should attempt to upset the enemy's psychological and political balance, not move along a predictable or expected course.

In this conceptual framework, use of the tactical force—air strikes on terrorist camps—for deterrent purposes—to influence that country to halt its support of terrorism—is risky. It could play directly into the hands of the terrorists and their sponsors by establishing a "tit for tat" pattern of response at a level of violence the terrorists and their supporters can accept and leaving the initiative in the terrorists' hands. It would also probably be a major media event, giving publicity to the terrorists—and perhaps unwanted publicity to the United States.

Moving from the concept of managing force for deterrence to specific plans for action is a formidable task. The specific planning is unlikely to occur in any one department or agency of the US government since it requires a judicious blending of several fields of expertise. (The proposed Opportunity Planning Group, as a focus of government national security expertise on terrorism, would be a logical recipient of this responsibility.) People within and outside the US government are objecting to any use of US military force, basing their objection on the need to maintain the "rule of law," a principle that weighs particularly heavily on the United States as the leader of the democratic world.[23] That position mistakenly assumes that international law on terrorism is mature and enforceable. In fact it is embryonic. The international community cannot even come close to agreeing on a definition of terrorism.

A US counterterrorism strategy must aim at maintaining US values. It should also search for ways to break new ground in international law, which is currently a subcomponent of our value system, by finding ways to curtail the terrorist threat. Although we are defending our value system, we do not want to unnecessarily damage important principles of international conduct. Consequently, US officials should refrain from using words such as *retaliation* when discussing the possible use of force against terrorists. (Military retaliation is illegal under international law.) Instead we should talk about *self-defense,* which is not only a right but an obligation of a responsible government.

This discussion of the use of force concludes with some thoughts about US policy toward Iran, since that country seems a likely target of US military strikes in the event of renewed Shi'a terrorist attacks on US embassies in the Middle East. Our primary foreign policy goals should be to influence a more Western oriented leadership to come to power after Khomeini. US military strikes into Iran could be the match that ignites the powder keg of Shi'a violence in the Middle East, endangering several governments in the Persian Gulf region as well as more US embassies. American strikes in Iran could cause Khomeini to send terrorist suicide squads into the United States. They also could increase the chances of a hostile, fundamentalist Shi'a government in Iran following Khomeini, or induce a "tilt" toward the USSR.

However, Iranian sponsored terrorism may be our single biggest threat at the moment, requiring us to make an intensive effort to protect ourselves. We can reduce our embassy staffs in many Middle East countries, particularly the Gulf states, and adopt new security measures at those embassies to make them less vulnerable. We can continue to try to drive a wedge into the Syrian-Iranian axis. Through our allies, such as Japan, Pakistan, and some European nations, who maintain good relations with Iran, we can warn the Iranian government of possible new US support of Iraq if Iranian sponsored terrorism is renewed. But our overall strategic interest in the Middle East would be best served without a military confrontation with Iran. The implication for our policymaking is that we should do more to make that confrontation less likely.

WHAT IF TERRORISM CONTINUES TO INCREASE?

A US commitment to implement the type of policies and programs I have outlined should help counter the terrorist threat. Still, we must also think about the "next step" in case state supported terrorism increases in intensity and violence, especially if states supporting terrorism appear to be acquiring nuclear or chemical warfare capabilities.

If state sponsored terrorism does continue to grow, the United States may have to consider a risky but potentially very potent counterterrorism spectacular—even one such as trying to gain the support of some Middle Eastern governments for the overthrow of the government of a "terrorist state," probably Libya or South Yemen. US planning, technology, equipment, and limited personnel could be matched with a greater personnel contribution from Arab states. The action should be explained as appropriate self-defense against a nation whose sponsorship of terrorism threatened the international community to the extent that counteraction became a reluctant necessity.

American history provides the precedent in President Jefferson's policy toward the Barbary pirates. In today's more complex world, any such action would require the most careful analysis of its effects on broader US foreign policy, including our relationship with the USSR. Indeed, that type of combined military operation would be subject to the general constraints of consistency with political objectives discussed earlier in this essay.

If such an action were to take place, timing could be critical in obtaining international and domestic support. We should therefore be prepared to move quickly if circumstances require action. This type of counterterrorist action should be looked at seriously if state sponsored terrorist attacks against US interests increase and we are unable to contain them with other measures. It is important, however, that we first undertake these other measures in good faith, both because they may work and because we can justify the risks of using force to the Congress, the American public, the rest of the world—and to ourselves—only after we have made that effort.

International terrorism, especially as sponsored and supported by nations, is a growing threat to US values and institutions. The United States can suffer damage from the threat if the US government either fails to develop an appropriate strategy to counter it or develops an inappropriate strategy that undermines US values. To date, the US response to terrorism has been mainly tactical. Only now is the government trying to address the issue of strategy—the lack of intellectual effort is probably the most serious of all the resource shortages that have plagued counterterrorism efforts. It is time for creative thinking on a US strategy that includes both defensive and offensive policies to contain terrorism.

But that thinking must begin with a vision of what a successful strategy needs to achieve. What US actions need to shape is the political perception of what is "acceptable" behavior by states, groups, or individuals with political motives or grievances. There is no international consensus on this issue now. But that lack, problems defining terrorism, and moral issues about the use of force cannot be excuses for US inaction in the face of such a real threat. Terrorism has gone beyond what the United States recognizes as acceptable behavior, and it seems that it will recognize no limits unless checked by successful policy. Ultimately, the United States should work toward gaining greater international consensus on what constitutes acceptable use of low-level violence. The priority requirement, however, is for the United States to take the lead in developing an effective counterterrorism strategy. If we do that, most of the world—including those who quarrel with us about the definition of terrorism and political philosophy—will applaud (at least silently) and eventually follow our leadership.

NOTES

I interviewed a number of government and private sector officials involved in the study of terrorism or having policy responsibilities related to US counterterrorist programs. To insure a candid discussion of the issues associated with trying to contain international terrorism, the ground rules for these interviews included the assurance of anonymity. Consequently, the footnotes below refer to those interviews without identifying the interviewees. In any case, the ideas contained in this paper are my own and should not be attributed to any of the officials who discussed the issue with me.

1. Interview in *Time Magazine,* 11 February 1985, with Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, p. 44.

2. Interview with Middle East diplomat.

3. Interview with US intelligence officials.

4. Jan Edward Schreiber, *The Ultimate Weapon: Terrorists and World Order* (New York: Morrow, 1978), p. 198.

5. David Fromkin, "The Strategy of Terrorism," in John P. Elliot and Leslie K. Gibson, eds., *Contemporary Terrorism* (Gaithersburg, Md.: International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1978), p. 15.

6. Ibid., p. 17.

7. US Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1983,* September 1984, p. 6.

8. US Department of State, *Terrorists Incidents Involving Diplomats,* August 1983, p. 1.

9. Claire Sterling, *The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1981).

10. Interview with State Department and intelligence officials.

11. Interview with State Department official.

12. *Washington Post,* 10 February 1985, p. 1.

13. Brian M. Jenkins, "High Technology Terrorism and Surrogate War," in Elliot and Gibson, eds., *Contemporary Terrorism,* p. 106.

14. Interview with retired State Department officer.

15. Interviews with State Department officials.

16. Interview with retired State Department officer.

17. Charles Maechling, Jr., "Containing Terrorism," *Foreign Service Journal,* July/August 1984, p. 37.

18. Interview with retired State Department official.

19. Interview with State Department official.

20. Interview with retired State Department official.

21. George Shultz, "Terrorism and the Modern World," US Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Current Policy No. 629, 25 October 1984, p. 6.

22. Maechling, "Containing Terrorism," p. 36.

23. Interview with specialist in international law.

2

SOVIET MILITARY POLICY

Subject of Political-Military Infighting?

by

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and
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Assessing the evolution and direction of Soviet military policy has never been easy for Western observers. Despite the Soviet tendency to publish lengthy, often propagandistic political commentaries and voluminous, technically oriented military documents, the West has yet to see a single publicly available document or volume that definitively outlines the military policy of the Soviet Union in pursuit of its national security objectives. Yet, if there ever was a time when a detailed and thoughtful understanding of Soviet military policy was needed, it is now.

Today, nearly 67 years after the revolution that was to make Russia a paradise on earth and spread communism throughout the world, the Soviet Union faces trouble and turbulence both at home and abroad. The Soviet leadership faces a broad and deep succession struggle as its septuagenarian majority comes face-to-face with mortality. Meanwhile, the early glamor of the communist ideology is losing its appeal in the Third World. Adding to these problems is an obvious shift in the East-West power balance or, in the Soviet parlance, the "correlation of forces." While the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact have stagnated politically, Western unity has improved. The United States is not only well on its way to recovery from its Vietnam-induced trauma but is also embarking on major arms programs designed to rebuild American strength both at home and abroad. More significantly, while the

US economy apparently has rebounded quite well from its recession of the late 1970s, growth in the Soviet economy has ground to a near halt. This circumstance has put increasing pressure on the aging Soviet leadership to take action to reverse the economy's perilous decline.

Much has been written in the Western press in recent months concerning the September 1984 "firing" of former Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal V. D. Ogarkov. Speculation has produced possible reasons for his dismissal ranging from *A* to Z—that is, from (*A*) unfavorable reaction to his position in the succession struggle anticipating Konstantin Chernenko's imminent demise, to (Z) the "official" rumor which refers to his "unpartylike tendencies." In fact, in recent years, the tenor of Marshal Ogarkov's speeches, interviews, and writings concerning the Soviet military *have* grown increasingly critical of the general lack of support being given the military, ostensibly indicting the Communist Party in pursuit of its ideological mission.

In the following pages, we will look at the formulation of Soviet military policy. Assuming that such policy evolves over time and from a confluence of factors, we will focus on what we consider two of the most significant of those factors—doctrine and economics.

Considering first how Soviet doctrine affects Soviet military policy, we will set the stage for our study with a historical look at debate and Party-military relations in the Soviet policymaking process. Then, after briefly reviewing the evolution of Soviet military doctrine, we will examine the major inconsistencies between that doctrine as espoused by Marx and Lenin and as it appears today. Closing out our examination of doctrine, we will review the seven years of Marshal Ogarkov's reign as head of the Soviet military machine and attempt to tie together his outspoken aspirations for the Soviet military with his accomplishments over the same period. Our intent is to sketch some potential trends for the future of Soviet military policy.

We will turn next to the Soviet economic situation—which we perceive to be the root of the differences between the Ogarkov-led General Staff and the Communist Party hierarchy. We first will examine the recent slowdown in the Soviet economy, continuing with an examination of Soviet military spending and some conclusions as to how the Soviet Union's economy might affect its military and its future military policy.

To conclude, we will attempt to bring back together the doctrinal and economic factors for a final look at the overall implications of evolving Soviet doctrine and a declining Soviet economy on the near-term direction of Soviet military policy.

SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE— EVOLUTION AND DEBATE

Nineteen fifty-three was a watershed year in the evolution of Soviet military thought. It was the year of Josef Stalin's death and marked the end of his stultifying influence on post–World War II Soviet military strategy. It also marked the beginning of more than 30 years of evolution in Soviet military doctrine as the Soviet leadership has grappled with the effects of nuclear and advanced technology weapons on modern warfare. A number of Western analysts over the succeeding years have attempted to paint Soviet doctrinal change as more "revolutionary" than "evolutionary." A close reading of both military and political doctrinal statement over the years reveals, however, a series of very consistent themes. The themes have shifted only gradually over time, and then only as required to keep pace with changing technology or an otherwise dynamic international situation. In fact, if compared with the evolution of US military doctrine and policy over the same period, the Soviet process has been a model of consistency and stability.

But in recent years, a number of Western analysts have worked long and hard exposing what they perceive as a "major rift" between the leadership of the Soviet General Staff and the hierarchy of the Soviet Communist Party. Leonid Brezhnev, speaking in the city of Tula in 1977, initially sparked the controversy with a radically new philosophy on the efficacy of nuclear war in general and on the nuclear arms race in particular. This debate has grown in recent years, both in scope and intensity. Differences between the Party and the military are alleged not only over the implications of and alternative strategies for nuclear war, but also over approaches to a fairly new Soviet concept of war—that is, a protracted, conventional-only superpower conflict.

In the context of the broad range of issues associated with the evolution of Soviet military doctrine, we hope to draw some conclusions regarding the future direction of Soviet military policy. Specifically, we will try (1) to put the current debate into perspective, (2) to review the evolution of Soviet military doctrine, (3) to examine the major doctrinal issues of today—nuclear and conventional—and (4) to summarize the issues with a discussion of the "Ogarkov philosophy."

The Debate In Perspective

That the Soviets have, in the past, had internal conflicts over the direction, scope, and intensity of particular policies, there can be no doubt.[1] The Soviet hierarchy traditionally has used the forum of public debate for problem solving, opinion forming, consensus seeking, etc. Each forum, in its own way, has been used as a tool to ease the "no win" dilemma frequently faced by decisionmakers in the Soviet system.

Similarly, recent years have witnessed a major ongoing debate between senior officers of the Soviet General Staff and senior members of the Communist Party's ruling Politburo over a number of defense-related issues. We will cover the specifics of the debate in considerable detail later. Our purpose in this section is only to put the current debate into perspective.

First, the fact that in the Soviet Union there is debate—even open debate—is not uncommon and should not be construed as cause for alarm. For example, when Nikita Khrushchev ascended to power after the death of Stalin in 1953, he personally instigated and actively encouraged a seven-year period of open debate over the direction of Soviet military doctrine in the light of a growing Soviet nuclear capability.[2] As in most situations of this nature, the debate continued until the ruling agency—in this case the Politburo—made its decision, at which time all debate ceased and the Party (including the military) fell in line.[3] Up to a point, then, we know that a certain level of debate is acceptable within the Soviet hierarchy.

From its earliest days, Soviet military doctrine has been both consistent and flexible—consistent in its "ends" and flexible in its "means." This seeming contradiction in terms brings us to our second point—that is, that Soviet military doctrine has two distinct sides: the sociopolitical and the military-technical.[4] Doctrine's political dimension, traditionally the exclusive domain of the Politburo, encompasses the most fundamental and enduring security objectives and policy goals of the Soviet government. Its ideological underpinnings lie in the philosophies of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Much more transitory, doctrine's military-technical dimension falls almost exclusively under the purview of the military leadership of the Soviet General Staff, focusing primarily upon the deployment and combat employment of Soviet military forces.[5]

Between these two separate but intertwined worlds, in that area where long term procurement decisions are made, is where disagreements appear to be surfacing. For its is here, presumably in the Politburo's Defense Council itself, that the seeds of future Soviet military policy are sown.[6] And it is from this forum that the remnants of debate seem to be spilling over. Indeed, one can be sure that debate surrounding the formulation, articulation, or implementation of Soviet military doctrine centers not on the ideological goals espoused in the political half of the doctrinal equation, nor on the military strategy to be employed in pursuit of those goals. Rather, the debate concerns primarily the scope, direction, and intensity of the force building or force employing military-technological effort. Simply put, any debate is a debate over "means," not "ends."

We should realize then, that a certain amount of debate is endemic to the Soviet policymaking process and that the primary focus of that debate is more technical than political. A third factor also should be mentioned to put this debate into perspective. There apparently are at least two sides to every major issue in Soviet policymaking, just as in the US system. Dan and Rebecca Strode described the current situation best in a Fall 1983 article published in *International Security* magazine:

> Within the Soviet leadership, there now appear to be two competing views of national security policy, each of which stresses one element of the previous dual-track . . . policy. The distinction is not a hawk/dove dichotomy, but rather a difference of style and method between decision makers who share basic objectives. All seek to enhance the position and power of the Soviet Union in the world today. They

> differ, however, over the means by which they believe this goal should be pursued. For convenience, these two divergent policy tendencies . . . may be characterized as "diplomacist" and "unilateralist." "Diplomacists" believe that, in the nuclear age, the U.S.S.R. cannot secure its national security . . . objectives without some degree of cooperation with the West. "Unilateralists," on the other hand, believe that detente has run its course, and that Soviet diplomatic and arms control efforts can no longer hope to secure U.S. acquiescence in Soviet attempts to shift the correlation of forces further to Soviet advantage. In the face of determined Western opposition, the unilateralists contend only redoubled defense efforts can secure the strategic gains which the U.S.S.R. made in the 1970s.[7]

Analyzing the probable leanings of the key Soviet defense policymakers, the Strodes labeled Marshal Ogarkov, then Chief of the Soviet General Staff, as an unqualified unilateralist (along with all others of "his responsibilities and background"); Leonid Brezhnev, as a diplomacist. Andropov and Chernenko, they said, shared "the former General Secretary's policy preferences." They described Defense Minister Ustinov as an enigma, more unpredictable than the others, but probably tending toward the unilateralists.[8]

In discussing the debate phenomenon, the Strodes stress that the apparently sharp divergences of opinion evident in the current debate are not new; that indeed they "have been latent for years" and are probably more a manifestation of the characteristic increase in conflict which traditionally accompanies the process of Soviet political succession.[9] Their closing comment summarizes their perspective:

> Just as U.S. military strategy has shifted repeatedly between counterforce and countervalue emphases, so too the relative merits of unilateral action versus

> diplomatic engagement will continue to divide Soviet policymakers. Both unilateralist and diplomacist tendencies are so deeply embedded in the Soviet system that neither is likely to remain submerged indefinitely.[10]

A fourth point basic to any understanding of Soviet military doctrine is that it is neither 100 percent internally consistent nor always ideologically pure, especially with respect to specific military options. As Cynthia Roberts said in her article "Soviet Military Policy in Transition,"

> First, the principles of Marxist-Leninist ideology do not always square with the objective realities of military technology. Second, over time the social-political and military-technical components of doctrine may veer apart. Third, dichotomies may arise because the principles of doctrine are defined so broadly that they incorporate a wide range of military options. As a consequence, Soviet military doctrine . . . may offer only general guidance on Soviet decisions about weapons procurement and force structure.[11]

Our final point here is, rather than one which must be considered, more one which must be purged from consideration. That point is, given the seeming intensity of the current debate, that there might be thoughts of a military coup d'etat. To even consider such a proposition ignores the organizational dynamics under which the military is required to operate, including the pervasive Main Political Administration (MPA), Committee for State Security (KGB), and informal informant networks which exist at almost every level. To do so also ignores the absolute fusion of Party, military, and security elites which has grown out of the Party's nomenklatura patronage system. As John Dziak puts it, under the nomenklatura system,

> By the time an officer approaches the upper levels of command, his entire career is entwined with the

> Party apparatus and its political considerations. . . . At that point in his career, he has indeed entered a condominium of Party and military officials whose interests are served by perpetuating the internal status quo.[12]

Bill Murphy, in his "Political-Military Relations in the U.S.S.R.," sums up the area of Party-military relations best:

> Despite [the] tension, the historical record suggests that the Soviet military does not aspire to gain a decisive influence over political decision-making at the expense of the Party. Throughout its history, and notwithstanding the many provocations it has endured, the military has made no attempt to seize power, effect a coup d'etat, or even acquire a decisive influence in the institutions through which the country is ruled.[13]

The Evolution of Soviet Military Doctrine

Having tried to place the debate into some sort of perspective, we turn now to a brief history of the evolution of Soviet military doctrine. According to Soviet sources, three distinct periods of doctrine can be identified: (1) 1917–1929, (2) 1929–1953, and (3) 1953–1960.[14] John Dziak, in his book *Soviet Perceptions of Military Power*, points out the significance of the three stages: the breaks between the periods occur at critical points in Party history. The year 1929 marked implementation of the first Five Year Plan: 1953, the death of Stalin and the beginning of Khrushchev's Party-encouraged debate regarding nuclear policy and strategy; and 1960, the emergence of the new nuclear doctrine resulting from the preceding debate.[15]

Two comments are in order here. First, with the benefit of hindsight, we should extend the third period (1953-1960) into the mid-1960s, that is, to the end of the abbreviated tenure of deposed Premier Nikita Khrushchev. This not only carries the period completely through the initial development of the Soviet nuclear umbrella, but also marks the beginning of the next phase of the military-technical doctrinal shift, the Brezhnev era of "combined arms" development.[16] Second, we should note an apparent additional shift, in the mid-1970s, marked by the signing of the 1972 Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) agreement and the Soviets' subsequent attainment of strategic nuclear parity with the United States. We will talk more of these periods in the coming paragraphs.

The period immediately following World War II was frustrating for Soviet military leaders as they attempted to apply the lessons of that conflict to their military strategy. Stalin's stifling leadership kept them from even discussing the impact of nuclear weaponry on modern warfare until the Soviet Union had attained its own viable nuclear capability. In Stalin's eyes, as long as the United States maintained overwhelming nuclear superiority, the Soviet Union would be forced to maintain a huge standing army designed primarily to seize Western Europe quickly should the United States place the "homeland" in nuclear jeopardy.

The first significant shift in Soviet military doctrine began in 1953. For nearly seven years following Stalin's death, Soviet military and political leaders, encouraged by Party First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev, openly discussed and debated the potential impacts of nuclear weaponry and missile technology on Soviet force structure and on the planning required for future conflicts. The resultant doctrinal theory was that once the superpowers became involved in a conflict, prompt escalation to a general nuclear war was inevitable. This new theory, signaling the rise of the "modernist" school within the Soviet military, prompted the formation of the Strategic

Rocket Forces (SRF) in December 1959 as the premier Soviet military service.[17]

Khrushchev's concomitant effort to shift resources from the military to the civilian sector of the Soviet economy leaned heavily on this new military doctrine. In his eyes, the speed, size, and destructiveness of the inevitable nuclear exchange rendered Stalin's large standing armies superfluous. Thus he felt justified in cutting nearly a third of the 3.6 million troops of the standing Soviet army. This cut in the traditional backbone of the Soviet armed forces and resultant shift in technical and fiscal emphasis to the new SRF, coupled with the political embarrassment suffered in the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, ultimately discredited Khrushchev in the eyes of both the political and military hierarchy. Together, these factors probably precipitated his untimely removal from power in 1964.[18]

After 1964, under Leonid Brezhnev, emphasis in the Soviet Union returned dramatically to overall military power as the key to attaining superpower status. Not only did the armed forces grow in size and quality, but they also were allocated the very best in material and personnel. Traditionally superior to the United States in conventional weaponry, the USSR became acknowledged as equal in strategic weaponry and aspired to equality in worldwide force projection capability. The late 1960s saw Khrushchev's doctrine of minimum deterrence overturned and replaced by a warfighting doctrine of "combined arms," the Soviet equivalent of NATO's "flexible response" strategy. The nuclear weapons option, portending shorter warning times and greater losses in men and material, called for much larger armies. Production of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) surged, and Admiral Gorshkov's naval force mission began shifting from pure coastal defense toward its current "blue water" orientation.[19]

Coincident with the Soviets' attaining rough strategic parity with the West in the late 1960s, Brezhnev's new "combined arms" approach to warfare also brought with it a shift in the Soviets' doctrinal attitude toward nuclear war. Articulated first in 1968 by Marshal V. D. Sokolovskiy, the revised concept held that

> the possibility is not excluded of wars occurring with the use of conventional weapons as well as the limited use of nuclear weapons in several theaters of military operations, or of a relatively protracted nuclear war with the use of capabilities of all types of armed forces.[20]

Although the distinction may appear minor, this statement was the first departure from the earlier Soviet position that escalation to total nuclear war was "inevitable." The new, more sophisticated attitude was that such escalation was only "likely." Soviet analysts have always criticized the US strategy, formulated under Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, of discrete counterforce attack. But the interrelationship between Sokolovskiy's writings and the Schlesinger doctrine raised in the Soviet consciousness the potential issues of intrawar deterrence and escalation control.[21]

The 1972 SALT agreement formalized the Soviets' nuclear superpower status. They could then turn their attention to reinforcing and refining their capabilities below the strategic threshold. Continuing to flesh out and modernize their previously espoused "combined arms" concept, the Soviets began deploying the mobile SS–20 intermediate-range missile, with multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles (MIRVs), and the medium range Backfire bomber. These new weapons systems added significant flexibility to the already formidable theater level warfighting capability of the Soviet Union.[22]

At about the same time, the successful airlift of military equipment to Egypt during the Middle East War of

1973 boosted the Soviet military's ego, and the "capitalist crisis" resulting from the 1973 Arab oil embargo encouraged the Soviets' hopes for "world revolution." These developments led to another modification of the military-technical side of Soviet doctrine. Marshal Grechko introduced this new theme in *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* in 1974:

> At the present stage, the historic function of the Soviet armed forces is not restricted merely to their function in defending our motherland and other Socialist countries. In its foreign policy activity, the Soviet state actively and purposely opposes the export of counterrevolution and the policy of oppression, supports the national liberation struggle, and resolutely resists imperialist aggression in whatever distant region of our planet it may appear. The Party and Soviet government rely on the country's economic and defense might in fulfilling these tasks.... The development of the external functions of the Socialist armies is a natural process. It will continue....[23]

In 1975, the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) formalized the new doctrine.

The result of the doctrinal evolution we've just discussed is what US policymakers face today. In *Soviet Perceptions of Military Power*, John Dziak, drawing on Soviet political-military texts, selected Western analyses, and *Voyennaya mysl'*, summarized the major doctrinal tenets of the Soviet Union from 1960 to the present:[24]

> —Nuclear war, though dangerous and unpredictable, is a continuation of politics.
>
> —Though war is not inevitable, a wide spectrum of conflicts between East and West is possible, and the USSR must be prepared for all of them.
>
> —A nuclear war with the West would be "just," but the USSR is not presented as the initiator.

—A nuclear war would be a coalition war between the U.S./NATO and the USSR/Warsaw Pact, worldwide in scope, from which "socialism" would emerge victorious though damaged.

—A doctrinal modification undertaken in the mid-1960s allows for the possibility of a conventional phase in a superpower conflict in Europe and for conventional wars occurring elsewhere. However, escalation to tactical, theater, and intercontinental nuclear exchanges from a conventional phase is highly likely.

—Military doctrine is by definition offensive, since such an approach is the most effective means to bring about the rapid defeat of the enemy.

—Should a war occur, overriding Soviet military objectives will be to: (1) deliver preemptive counterforce strikes to limit damage to the USSR; (2) insure surviving "reserves" for a second strike; (3) inflict total defeat on the enemy; and (4) occupy critical enemy territory. In the Soviet idiom, to "frustrate" and "repulse" an enemy attack connotes preemption and counterforce strikes and active and passive defenses, all designed to destroy as much as possible of the enemy's forces and to limit damage to the USSR.

—The basic political objective in *any* war is victory. In nuclear war, victory means: (1) though damaged, the USSR continues to function politically, economically,and militarily after the initial exchange; (2) prosecution of the war continues until all enemy forces are destroyed or defeated; (3) Europe is occupied; (4) the USSR recovers in a reasonable time and Soviet-directed socialism prevails in the world.

—The USSR has no intention of conducting war termination negotiations with the governments in power at the beginning of the war.

—Nuclear war may be short, concluding after a massive exchange. However, a protracted war is also possible, increasing the need for conventional forces to "secure" the victory.

—Nuclear weapons may be used selectively in a "battle-management" sense, especially to preserve European economic/industrial assets for subsequent Soviet exploitation. Nuclear weapons may be used to change the "correlation of forces" in one's favor in either preemption or retaliation; however, they are *not* used for "limited" or "demonstration" purposes in the Western sense.

—The objective of the CPSU's military equipment policy since the first Five Year Plan (1928) has been quantitative and qualitative technological superiority.

Doctrinal Issues Today

Shortly after the Party's Twenty-fifth Congress in 1975, an ongoing discussion began within the Soviet Union over the general efficacy of nuclear weapons and how the Soviet government ought to incorporate them into its military doctrine and foreign policy. This discussion has continued to the present. In recent years it has evolved into an open disagreement between Soviet political and military leaders over the nature of the US military threat and the adequacy of the Soviet defense effort to counter it. This section of our essay addresses this debate, centering on two sets of key issues.

The first set of issues is nuclear in orientation, concerning the Soviet concept of deterrence and how it ties into the oft-discussed Soviet military goal of "victory" in nuclear war. These issues also involve the seeming doctrinal contradiction between the Soviets' warfighting principles of preemption and surprise and their otherwise counter-doctrinal "no first use" statements.

The second set of issues, apparently central to the dismissal of Marshal Ogarkov and to the current debate, flows from the first. It seems that part of the Soviet political leadership is indeed questioning the inevitability of nuclear escalation in a superpower conflict. If so, are we not seeing, in recent statements, counter-demands by the Soviet General Staff for full support of the military in its pursuit of the means to fight a protracted conventional or tactical nuclear war?

Nuclear Issues. One picks up the first strains of the current debate in the literature of the late 1970s. Various elements of the Soviet hierarchy put forward themes and counterthemes exploring the notion that a major East-West conflict might be fought without nuclear escalation. As we have seen, this debate culminated more than twenty years of evolution of Soviet military doctrine. The Soviets began this process with the thesis that any superpower confrontation would inevitably go nuclear; they moved through the stage in which they averred that such a conflict would "likely" go nuclear; and today the Soviets appear to be considering that the next major conflict might remain conventional for an extended, perhaps indefinite period. This is not to say that the Soviets have ruled out the possibility of tactical, theater, or strategic nuclear operations. As any student of the Soviet military can attest, once the Soviets develop and field a capability, that capability acquires a life of its own, influencing all future force enhancement programs. Additionally, the Soviets realize that their new conventional emphasis could not be viable without the overall security provided by their nuclear umbrella. On the other hand, the growing nuclear arsenals on both sides appear to have engendered increasing concern over the general usefulness of nuclear weapons and the potential costs associated with their use—in defeat or victory.

"Victory" in Nuclear War? Soviet military doctrine has always held that, as quoted earlier from John Dziak, "Nuclear war . . . is a continuation of politics . . . from which 'socialism' would emerge victorious." Repeatedly in recent years, however, prominent Soviet leaders have publicly recognized that nuclear war would entail such death and destruction that there could be no real winner. Even Leonid Brezhnev, in February 1981, said, "To try to prevail over the other side in the arms race or to count on victory in a nuclear war is dangerous madness."[25] In April of the same year, Brezhnev's Politburo protege and eventual successor, Konstantin Chernenko, echoed those thoughts: "Any responsible figure is forced to recognize that the use of nuclear weapons places the future of mankind in doubt."[26] Meanwhile, Soviet military leaders continue to view their job as the "preparation of troops of the army and navy . . . to *defeat* a powerful, technically equipped opponent in any condition of modern war."[27]

Many analysts contend that the alleged doctrinal rift is nothing more than the well planned product of a Soviet "disinformation" campaign.[28] As proof of this thesis, two key factors are normally cited. First, we have yet to see any sign of remission in the scope or intensity of either Soviet research and development (R&D) or force deployment efforts.[29] Along these lines, Western intelligence suggests that progress in Soviet ballistic missile defense (BMD) research may be so advanced that the USSR could field a nationwide BMD system as soon as one year after the West can confidently detect an initial decision to deploy.[30] Western skeptics also point with suspicion to the still-unexplained orientation of the "long lead" Krasnoyarsk radar site.[31] These analysts argue that this continued bias toward and heavy investment in strategic defense does not correspond with the supposed Politburo view that nuclear war is suicidal or that preparation for it is counterproductive. Critics also point to recent large scale Soviet strategic exercises as similarly defying the bureaucratic "doom and gloom" philosophy. Coordinated ICBM launches integrated with antisatellite attacks and BMD intercepts seem to suggest that the Soviets do have faith in their military capability and do believe that a credible, damage limiting strategy is feasible.[32]

We support the philosophy that actions speak louder (and truer) than words. A third possible theory, however, might resolve the question. Brezhnev did not say that victory in nuclear war was impossible, only that one would be foolish to count on it. Given the level of Soviet technology and the capabilities of the Soviet military in 1982, could we not assume that the Politburo was merely expressing doubts about the impenetrability of Soviet defenses in their statements regarding "victory" in nuclear war? Public acknowledgement of these doubts would "reassure" the world that the Soviet Union is a peaceful nation operating from purely defensive motives. It could also, along with proper financial support, stimulate the Soviet military leadership to continue strengthening and tightening the Soviet web of defense.

The "No First Use" Issue. Another recent doctrinal inconsistency was Brezhnev's assertion in June 1982 that the Soviet Union would not employ nuclear weapons first in a conflict.[33] Soviet doctrine has long held that, "Should a war occur, [one of the] overriding Soviet military objectives will be to . . . deliver preemptive counterforce strikes to limit damage to the USSR. . . . "[34] Yet even Marshal Ogarkov, the leading military critic of Soviet diplomatic posturing, has acknowledged that it would be suicidal for either side to gamble on striking first in a nuclear war.[35] In fact, Marshal Ogarkov directed the General Staff to examine this second inconsistency between Soviet military doctrine and traditional Marxist-

Leninist doctrine. According to Cynthia Roberts, four main themes emerge from the General Staff's study:[36]

> (1) The current strategic situation renders both the Soviet Union and the United States vulnerable to retaliatory nuclear strikes.
>
> (2) The Soviet Union must continue its efforts to prevent the outbreak of war. In the event that such efforts fail, Soviet strategic objectives should be obtained as swiftly as possible with the use of conventional forces.
>
> (3) Nuclear escalation must be avoided by the expeditious achievement of Soviet objectives.
>
> (4) The Soviet Union must be organized and prepared to fight a protracted war.

US and Soviet strategic forces continue to grow increasingly survivable. At the same time, Western policymakers have seized upon advanced technology conventional weapons and escalation control as the keys to avoiding the nuclear threshold. The result is the belief that superiority of forces across the spectrum of conflict must be the Soviets' means of attaining their ideological goals.

Deterrence—What does It Mean? Closely tied to the issue of first use of nuclear weapons are the Soviets' and the West's perceptions of each other's concepts of deterrence. Although Soviet leaders occasionally have acknowledged a state of mutual vulnerability, the Soviet approach to deterrence traditionally has been to strive for nothing less than a credible warfighting, warwinning capability.[37] In fact, two prominent Soviet theoreticians characterized the US view of deterrence as "a position which . . . is erroneous on the theoretical level and harmful on the practical level," and "which counts only on the possibility of preventing war and ignores (the possibility of) its being unleashed."[38]

We do not mean to insinuate that the Soviets today view nuclear war as a rational instrument of policy. But in the Soviet Union's development and maintenance of a credible warfighting, warwinning capability, it forms its own concept of deterrence. That concept calls for a capability designed to minimize the likelihood of an outbreak of hostilities and, above all, reduce the risk of a direct attack on the USSR. In short, the Soviet attitude is that a competent, responsible government does not voluntarily entrust the fate of its nation to the enemy's rationality and self-restraint, but instead relies only on the strength of its own military capabilities.[39]

Conventional Issues. The most recent "debate" between the Soviet political leadership and military hierarchy has focused primarily on the desired direction, intensity, and scope of efforts to counter Western technological gains in the conventional warfare arena. The issues concern doctrine and planning for that phase of conflict just short of the nuclear threshold. To understand these issues, one must know of the accomplishments of Marshal Ogarkov during his tenure as Chief of the Soviet General Staff.

The signing of SALT I in 1972 and SALT II in 1975, combined with President Brezhnev's renouncement in 1977 of strategic superiority as a Soviet goal, put finite bounds on the size of the Soviet strategic force. Accepting this political constraint, the Soviet military under Marshal Ogarkov devoted itself to a robust program of modernizing and enhancing its existing strategic nuclear force structure. Not only have its SS–18 and SS–19 ICBMs received new warheads and guidance systems, but testing continues on its new "fifth generation," solid fuel SS–X–24 and SS–X–25. Deployment of the first *Typhoon* class ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), to be followed soon by sea trials on the second, give the Soviets their first capability for sustained operations under the security of the Arctic ice cap. Additionally, flight testing continues on the long-awaited Blackjack bomber, expected to replace eventually the aging workhorse force of Bears and Bisons.[40]

In the same manner, after Brezhnev's "no first use" assertion at the United Nations in June 1982, Marshal Ogarkov's General Staff responded with prompt, positive action to reduce the vulnerability of Soviet forces to a preemptive first strike. Already massive anti-ballistic missile (ABM) R&D efforts and civil defense investments have continued; the SS–X–24 and –25 are likely to be capable of both mobile and silo basing; a unified strategic command was recently created to control the entire range of Soviet strategic forces; improvements in early warning launch detection and in the survivability of command, control, and communications (C^3) systems have continued. We see a relatively new-found Soviet emphasis on being able to survive and wage war across the total spectrum of conflict contingencies.[41]

The Soviet General Staff faces the inevitable conclusion that a significant portion of the Soviets' next major war is likely to be fought exclusively with conventional weapons. Laying this conclusion alongside the current US technological and force improvement effort, we can understand the concern of the Soviet military leadership and can put the current Soviet hierarchical debate into perspective.

The Ogarkov Influence and Legacy

We should also take a look at Marshal Ogarkov's personal stake in the recent "debate." Until his recent "reassignment," Marshal Ogarkov was a full member of the CPSU Central Committee and had been Chief of the Soviet General Staff since 1977. In the latter position, Ogarkov had established an enduring reputation as a brilliant staff officer who placed the highest priority on keeping pace with developments in US and Western arms systems.[42] His brilliance as a military leader and strategist, however, did not protect him from the wrath of his superiors in the Communist Party. A prolific writer, his troubles with the political hierarchy probably began with his article "Voennaya Stratgiya," published in 1980. Many Westerners viewed this article as confirming that the Soviets believed in the possibility of "victory" in nuclear war. As discussed earlier, the concept of nuclear victory contradicted the impression the new diplomacist Leonid Brezhnev was trying to create.[43]

Although Ogarkov undoubtedly was called to task for his impertinence, he returned to the warpath in July 1981. In an article in *Kommunist,* he asserted that "direct . . . material preparation of a new world war is being carried out in the West under U.S. leadership." Turning his accusing finger inward, he went on to charge that Soviet military art had "no right" to lag behind in weapons development, "particularly . . . when on the basis of . . . technical progress, the main arms systems change practically every 10–12 years."[44]

In the party's rejoinder in November 1981, Defense Minister Ustinov declared himself "optimistic" that the potential might of the Soviet military could deter the outbreak of a new world war. Then, turning to a discussion of the nation's economic problems, he pointedly warned against the "senseless waste" of the nation's wealth represented by military preparations.[45] Ogarkov responded that "mere potentiality" does not become actuality "all by itself."[46]

Ogarkov may also have directly or indirectly opposed Brezhnev's "no first use" pledge. In a detailed and very pessimistic article in *Pravda* in September 1981, Defense Minister Ustinov alluded to worries within the armed forces about the government's "peace policy." His language suggested an internal debate over defense policies. He said that "the Soviet people" had been "asking questions whether the right moment has been chosen for" the pledge of no first use of nuclear weapons, "and whether by the unilateral commitment, we are not incurring excessive danger upon our people, our homeland [and] the cause of socialism."[47]

Continued friction between the Ogarkov-led military and the political leadership probably precipitated Brezhnev's last major address, on 27 October 1982. Appearing before an audience of military commanders—an almost unprecedented meeting—Brezhnev addressed what he described as a series of "new questions" which had arisen since the Twenty-sixth Congress of the CPSU. He first reiterated the traditional party line regarding the importance of keeping pace with US weapons technology. He then described domestic economic problems which were interfering with Soviet technological growth. Citing "bottlenecks" in the metals, fuels, and transport industries—all critical areas of the economy for the military—Brezhnev seemed to substantiate rumors of a reduction in the growth of the military's share of the Soviet national budget. Turning next to the Soviet Union's international strategic situation, Brezhnev said,

> In this situation, it is very important, of course, how relations with other countries develop. Of no little significance are relations with China. We truly want a normalization of relations with this country and are doing everything we possibly can in this direction.[48]

In sum, Brezhnev appeared to signal a desire, either personal or, more significantly, on behalf of the Politburo—a desire to reduce the Soviet Union's dependence on military might as its only tool in the international political arena, and to help replace that dependence with improved strategic relations with China.[49]

On 9 May 1984, Ogarkov was extensively interviewed by *Krasnaya Zvezda*, the Soviet armed forces newspaper. The interview reveals a lot not only about the man, but also about the military consensus he formed during his seven years as Chief of the Soviet General Staff. In the interview, discussing nuclear weapons, Ogarkov said,

> You do not have to be a military man or a scientist to realize that a further buildup is becoming senseless.... The point is that, with the quantity and diversity of nuclear missiles already achieved, it has become impossible to destroy the enemy's systems with a single strike. ... A crushing retaliatory strike against the aggressor ... inflicting unacceptable damage, becomes inevitable in present conditions.

He went on to say that, because of the nuclear deadlock, the next war was more likely to be fought by modern conventional forces with the latest technology, implying that the Soviets had to spend more to catch up with the West in this area.

Ogarkov pointed out that "rapid changes" in conventional weapons, such as unmanned aircraft, cruise missiles with conventional warheads, and new electronic control systems, had enhanced "the destructive potential of conventional weapons, bringing them closer, so to speak, to weapons of mass destruction in terms of their effectiveness." After noting that technological advances could produce "even more destructive and previously unknown types of weapons," he said,

> Work on these new types of weapons is already in progress ... in the United States. Their development ... in turn, cannot fail to change established notions of the methods and forms of armed struggle and even of the military might of the state.[50]

We can only speculate at this point whether or not the political-military debate will continue now that

Marshal Ogarkov has been removed. But the fact is that Ogarkov's latest statements come after a series of changes in the Soviet military organization and its operational strategy which do indeed, as Ogarkov said, "change established notions of the methods and forms of armed struggle."

First, consider Ogarkov's thoughts on organizational structure. His approach, already implemented, has shifted the planning for strategic operations away from the concept of the front and toward the framework of theaters of operations (TVDs).[51] According to one prominent US analyst, six principal continental TVDs currently exist within the Soviet Union: Western, Northwestern, Southwestern, Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and Far Eastern. A series of intermediate commanders links these theaters to the Soviet General Staff. Along the same lines, Soviet tactical air forces, previously grouped in Frontal Aviation air armies along with strategic bombers, are now aligned under the newly created "Air Forces of the Military District." The former PVO Strany air defense forces also have been restructured and renamed "Troops of Air Defense," and now incorporate all ground based strategic and tactical air defense assets (including surface-to-air missile forces). These realignments give each of the 16 Soviet military districts both air force and air defense commands. This organization permits greater flexibility in the use of air assets for both offensive and defensive missions and allows the districts to fall much more neatly into the TVD structure.[52]

The Ogarkov touch is also evident in Soviet operational strategy. In theory, much of the organizational change outlined above is meant only to provide a more coherent structure for centralized General Staff control of an evolving conflict. With the nuclear stalemate forcing a return to preparations for sub-nuclear conflict, planners have realized that new conventional weapons and technologies can be used to eliminate many former theater level strategic targets.[53] For example, Western planners presume that the first Soviet thrusts in hostilities with NATO will be massed air strikes against NATO's intermediate and long range nuclear forces and C^3 nodes. Such strikes would reflect a continuation of the Soviet doctrinal imperative of preempting the possibility of strikes against the homeland.

Along the same lines, the Soviets have returned to their "Mobile Group" concept of World War II. Soviet strategists have apparently regained an appreciation for the fact that the modern dispersed ground battle is best exploited by switching the focus of the fight to the enemy's rear. In this relatively new approach to an old concept, specially trained, heavily armed, high speed raiding forces would conduct deep disruptive operations. Called Operational Maneuver Groups (OMGs) and special purpose troops (SPETSNAZ), these forces are specifically designed for search and destroy missions.[54] Meanwhile, Soviet air forces would seek to gain and maintain air superiority in the battle for NATO's skies.

By describing Marshal Ogarkov's accomplishments as Chief of the Soviet General Staff and the apparent conflict between Ogarkov and his bosses in the Soviet political hierarchy, we have tried to illustrate the most likely future directions of Soviet military policy, at least from a military doctrine standpoint. One must understand, however, that as an object seen through a prism is frequently distorted in size and shape, so might Soviet military policymaking viewed through the words, accomplishments, and experiences of Marshal Ogarkov be distorted. Certainly, no better medium exists through which we can observe the inner workings of the Soviet doctrinal and policymaking machine. We must only beware of the fickleness of the prism's distortions when we draw our conclusions.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

A second element in considering whether we are witnessing a major shift in the development of Soviet military thought is the question of resource allocation. Has there been or is there likely to be a shift in Soviet resource allocation priorities? Will the military receive a smaller piece of the pie so that additional resources can be allocated to Soviet citizens' wants and needs? Any study of military thought should include a discussion of resources since a country's economic base must be able to support its military doctrine. Our look at resource allocation will include a review of the Soviet economy and Soviet military spending.

The Soviet Economy

The USSR has one of the largest economies in the world. It has tremendous reserves of natural resources, a labor force 1½ times that of the United States, and a tough, unchallenged leadership dedicated to continued growth. Since World War II, the Soviet economy has grown at rates comparable to Western European nations' and much faster than the United States'. Only Japan's economy has grown at a consistently faster pace. Since 1955, the Soviet gross national product (GNP) has risen from one-third to one-half that of the United states. This growth has been based on the mobilization of both capital and labor. The Soviets have restricted the output of consumer goods and consumption to provide resources for capital investment. At the same time, they have rapidly expanded their labor force by including women and shifting many workers from agriculture to industry. These actions, plus rapid exploitation of relatively cheap natural resources, especially oil and gas, have played a key role in the rapid development of the Soviet economy.[55]

Rapid economic growth has enabled the USSR to pursue three objectives simultaneously: (1) to catch up militarily with the United States, (2) to steadily expand its industrial base, and (3) to meet minimal consumer expectations for improved welfare.[56] The Soviets' success in the pursuing of these objectives has been considerable. The USSR has caught up militarily with the United States; its industrial base has grown significantly; and its citizens' standard of living has improved steadily since World War II.

The performance of the Soviet economy since World War II has indeed been impressive—until recently. But despite rapid growth, the economy has been and continues to be fraught with problems. Growth has been achieved with massive inputs of labor, capital, and cheap natural resources, which consistently overcame poor performance in productivity. From 1950 to 1980, the Soviet GNP grew at an average annual rate of 4.7 percent. However, the average growth rate decreased to 2.6 percent between 1975 and 1980, and dropped to 1.1 percent in 1979 and 1980.[57] The Soviet economic growth rate has now dropped below the growth rates of other industrial countries, even below the world average. Problems exist in key components of the economy: labor, agriculture, natural resources, and productivity.

Since the 1930s, the USSR has attacked economic problems by throwing manpower at them. Manpower came from three sources: transfer of workers from agriculture to industry, migration of women from home to the work force, and an increase in the working age population. For all practical purposes, these sources of labor have now dried up. Although almost 25 percent of the population is still employed in agriculture, chronic shortages in agricultural production make it unlikely that additional significant numbers will move to industry. The vast majority of Soviet women are now at work. The only remaining source of labor is new people reaching working age, that is, population growth. But the Soviet economy has fully absorbed the baby boom that followed World War II, and the Soviet birth rate has been steadily declining. So natural, incremental growth of the work force is not available. The economy must now deal with a relatively fixed labor population.

Problems with Soviet agriculture are well known. Soviet leaders from Stalin to Khrushchev, from Brezhnev to Chernenko, have vowed to end the chronic shortage of food, but the problem is unresolved. During his 18 years in power, Brezhnev saw to the passage of some 250 resolutions, issued by both the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers, affecting virtually every aspect of Soviet agriculture. The key to Brezhnev's policy was a sharp increase in agricultural capital investment. Between 1965 and 1980 capital investment increased 300 percent, increasing agriculture's share of total national investment from 28 percent to 38 percent.[58] Despite this massive effort, the food problem remains serious. During the same period, costs of production increased more than 50 percent and more than half of Soviet farms lost money.[59] While investing 38 percent of its capital and employing one-fourth of its work force in agriculture, the USSR still is suffering from shortages in major food items such as grain and meat and still cannot provide its people with the variety of products we in the West take for granted.

Natural resources, once abundant, cheap, and a major source of strength, are now also part of the economic problem. The USSR still leads the world in production of many natural resources, but the cost of production has increased dramatically while availability has decreased. The Soviets took a short term view in exploiting their riches from the earth. They consumed the cream—the easiest to get and the highest quality—as fast as possible to fuel both their industrial growth and their hard currency export. They concentrated investment in exploiting known reserves instead of in developing new replacement sources. Many resources west of the Urals are nearing depletion or uneconomical production levels. Thus the Soviets must move east of the Urals for oil and mineral exploration and development. The inhospitable environment, a greater distance to market, and a woefully inadequate transportation system will make the cost of production soar. Further, the Soviets do not have the technology needed to exploit these harder to get resources. Technology could be imported, but only at high cost. The Soviets are trapped a vicious circle: the more resources they use to produce raw materials, the fewer resources they have available for developing advanced industry; the further advanced industries fall behind modern standards, the more raw materials are required per unit of production, thus the greater the demand for raw materials production.[60]

The Soviet economy, compared with those of other advanced nations, historically has suffered from poor productivity. The USSR has had enough time since the Socialist Revolution to become at least as economically developed as the other major industrial powers. The USSR had the ingredients required to develop economically: a large labor force, land, vast natural resources, and capital. They needed only to put the ingredients together efficiently. Instead, we have seen more than 60 years of inefficiency, waste, and resource misallocation.

The Soviets have built a system which rewards mediocrity, threatens innovation, and demotivates the work force. The result is poor productivity. For each unit of GNP, the USSR invests 2.75 times as much labor, 2.0 times as much capital, and 2.2 times as much land as does the United States.[61] Agricultural productivity is one-tenth the US level. Despite investment roughly equal to that in the United States, overall industrial productivity is only one-half. Soviet productivity actually declined in the 1970s[62] and has only recently improved slightly under Andropov's labor reform (discipline) policies.

With these problems in productivity, it is surprising that the Eleventh Five Year Plan called for reduced capital investment. This policy seems incongruous with estimates that only one percent of Soviet factories have been modernized. Further, at least one intelligence analyst estimates that up to 40 percent of all capital equipment has been in operation more than 20 years, that 30 percent of capital goes for repair, and that up to 20 percent of industrial personnel work on equipment repair.[63] Even Konstantin Chernenko admits that 14 percent of all equipment does not work.[64] When we also consider the poor attitude and low morale of both the work and management forces, we see why productivity is so low. Worker apathy and lack of modern plants will require significant attention and correction if Soviet productivity is ever to meet Western standards.

In discussing the Soviet economy, one must also address the consumer side. The major problems throughout the Soviet economy all come into focus in the consumer sector, historically the "poor cousin" of the Soviet economy. Starting from a very low point at the end of World War II, the Soviet citizen's standard of living has steadily improved. Until the late 1970s, per capita consumption increased about four percent annually; although the standard of living was still far below Western standards, things were getting better.[65] The situation, however, turned for the worse in 1978 with six consecutive years of poor economic performance. The result has been a halt in the increase in living standards.

A series of harvest failures has led to shortages of food, especially meat and dairy products. The people have more money to spend but far less to spend it on. The gap between supply and demand continues to grow.

The problem is serious enough that Soviet leaders feel compelled to address the issue frequently by asking the people for patience and calling on industry to improve production of consumer goods:

> The population's growing effective demand is still not being fully met. This requires constant attention and increasingly persistent work to overcome the shortages of goods and services and to achieve a balance between supply and demand.[66]

Economic Prospects

The Soviet economy limped into the 1980s and is ailing badly now. The US Central Intelligence Agency estimates overall annual growth of the Soviet GNP at 2 percent,[67] but an actual decrease in the GNP might be possible. Is the economy merely in a slowdown, or does it face long term, fundamental problems? The USSR is in a period (10–20 years) of faltering economic growth.[68] The problem is not only quantitative but also qualitative.[69] The Soviets do not have a solution. Their historical formula of increasing manpower, money, or resources to keep the economy growing will not work any longer because there is little or no growth left in these critical areas. The only way the USSR can achieve the required growth is through productivity improvements. We will now look at prospects for the Soviet economy over the next 10 years in the areas of labor, natural resource consumption, and productivity.

Labor. The problem with the labor supply, as described earlier, will not improve. In fact, the rate of growth in the labor force will decline sharply for the rest of this century. The natural increase in the working age population will drop off from 2,000,000 per year in 1979 to about 300,000 per year by the year 2000, or about an 85 percent decrease in incremental growth.[70] Further, what increase there is will come almost exclusively from the less skilled and less mobile Turkish populations in South Central Asia. Use of these people in the labor force will require either their forced migration to the industrial areas of the country (not likely) or heavy investment to industrialize their region. To overcome the labor shortfall, the USSR could reduce the size of the military, lengthen the work week, delay worker retirement to an older age, or improve productivity. Only the latter seems appealing to the Soviet leadership.

Natural resources. The USSR will continue to be one of the world's leaders in natural resources, but availability will decline over the next ten years. The vast Soviet expanse has no lack of natural raw materials, but their location and the Soviets' inefficient technology make the cost of production high. According to press reports and the Central Intelligence Agency's Office of Soviet Analysis, Soviet oil production has begun its long-predicted decline. Crude oil production in January 1985 was 2.7 percent lower than in January 1984.[71] Although there are plenty of potential oil reserves in the Arctic, East Siberia, and off-shore areas, development of these reserves is at least a decade away.[72] Meanwhile, the USSR will change from a net exporter to a net importer of oil. The major effect of this change will be a loss of hard currency from export.

The following example helps explain the significance of the Soviets' oil situation. The USSR currently exports one million barrels of oil per day at a price of $29 a barrel, yielding $10 billion per year in hard currency. If by the end of the 1980s the Soviets will be importing as much oil as they're exporting today, that means a cost to them, at today's prices, of nearly $10 billion per year, equating to a reduction of $20 billion in hard currency available for purchasing other critical imports from the West.

Turning to a major area of industry affected by natural resources reserves, the USSR is the world's largest producer of steel, but it nevertheless is a steel importer, and its imports have doubled since 1970. The quality of iron ore continues to decline, driving production costs higher. Wise Soviet investment could solve this problem. Rather than using known ore reserves (low quality) and keeping obsolete steel mills in operation, the USSR could develop new ore mines and build new steel mills. It's one of several critical investment decisions Soviet leaders must face.

Productivity. The future of the Soviet consumer is not bright. The Soviet standard of living will stagnate or improve only slightly in the coming years. The consumer has consistently taken a back seat to heavy industry and the military. A reduction of available hard currency (because of the natural resources problem mentioned above) would reduce food imports, and shortages of food could worsen. Per capita consumption could grow at only half the average rate since 1965. There will be no progress in closing the gap in living standard with the West or even with Eastern Europe. Increases in wages over the next 10 years, combined with slower growth in availability of consumer goods, would result in higher prices, more widespread shortages, and increasing consumer frustration.[73]

If the traditional methods of ensuring economic growth (increasing labor, capital, or natural resources) are not possible, the only other way to stimulate growth is to increase productivity. Productivity gains have always been difficult for the Soviets—the system inspires low productivity. Two methods of improving productivity are available: automation and improved worker performance. The USSR does not have the technology to automate its industry enough to get significant growth quickly. They can buy the technology from the West if someone will sell it and if they have the money to pay for it. Finding a seller will be easier than coming up with the cash.

The other possibility, improved worker performance, requires major reform. The economy, overcentralized and lacking proper incentives, is a command economy, not a market economy. Factories and farms work according to the plans of the elite, not according to the demands of the marketplace. The communists have a long history of attempted economic reforms, each trying to increase worker productivity. Andropov's push for worker discipline produced minor increases. Major reform probably requires a change in leadership.

A change in leadership gives Soviet economists a golden opportunity to express their views more openly.[74] Considering the age of the present leader, it is possible a new, younger leader might spark reform that could significantly increase worker productivity. Even this is doubtful, however, because most of the changes that might work have to do with ownership of the means of production. The bottom line looks like little improvement in productivity over the next decade.

Soviet Military Spending

Our description of problems in the Soviet economy and prospects for future economic development serves several purposes. It sets the stage for a review of military spending, and it puts military spending into perspective. It also clarifies the reason for the debate on resource allocation for the military; it is the need for more resources in the domestic sector that threatens the historical preeminence of the military's claim on resources. Given the extensive economic problems we have discussed and the poor prospect of improvement under present policy, resource allocation to the military is a logical candidate for reduction. Reducing military spending and manpower would significantly improve the prospects of rejuvenating the ailing Soviet economy. Our analysis of Soviet military spending will cover historical trends, reduced growth in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and possibilities for renewed growth.

Following the devastation of the European USSR and the loss of over 20 million lives in World War II, the USSR set out to build a military machine strong enough to ensure that that experience would not be repeated. Since World War II, the overriding objective of Soviet policy has been the acquisition of a strong military capability. The emphasis on military growth has been broken only during the Khrushchev years. Defense spending has risen, in real terms, by four to five percent per year.

All analysts agree that military spending has consumed a large portion of the total Soviet GNP over the last 40 years, but they disagree on the exact portion. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimates the figure at 12 percent of the total GNP;[75] the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) estimates 14 percent;[76] Edward N. Luttwak agrees with 14 percent, but says that if everything is included, such as the KGB, border guards, and security forces, the true figure approaches 50 percent;[77] William T. Lee says 20 percent; and prominent Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov calculated the share at 40 percent.[78] Whatever the exact portion of the GNP allocated to the military may be, it clearly is an extremely large portion as compared to defense spending in other countries: 5.5 percent of the GNP for the United States, 4.5 percent average for NATO, and 0.9 percent for Japan.[79] Soviet military spending has been growing faster than the Soviet GNP since 1970. The military had increased its total share of the GNP to approximately 16 percent in the late 1970s.[80] These ever-increasing expenditures have permitted expansion and modernization of Soviet military forces across the board.

In physical terms, the Soviet Union has—[81]

- Increased its military manpower by one-third.
- Expanded its weapons production facilities by more than one-half.
- Increased the number of its deployed intercontinental nuclear deliver vehicles nearly sixfold.
- More than tripled the size of its battlefield nuclear forces.
- Doubled the artillery firepower of its divisions.
- Increased ninefold the weight of ordnance its tactical air forces can deliver deep in NATO territory.
- Quadrupled the number of missile launchers on its ships and submarines.
- Introduced series after series of new, heavily armed surface ships, nuclear powered submarines, and aircraft.

The point is that Soviet military power has grown enormously since 1964, that this growth has brought the USSR to superpower status, and that it has occurred despite a faltering Soviet economy.

By the late 1970s, the USSR had attained superpower status and achieved one of its major policy objectives: to catch up militarily with the United States. At that point the Soviets reduced the rate of increase in spending for the military; problems in the Soviet economy, however, were getting worse. Some Western analysts and politicians were quick to say that the Soviet military was finally strong enough, that the Soviets would now change priorities and devote more resources to their domestic economy. A top CIA analyst said that Soviet defense spending grew at an annual rate of just 2 percent from 1976 through 1981 and that growth in military procurement actually dropped to zero.[82] Both the DIA and CIA agree that Soviet defense spending slowed down significantly.[83] Figures for weapons production seem to support the conclusion that there was little, if any, growth in military procurement.[84]

What caused the slowdown? Whether Soviet leaders dictated the slowdown and a concomitant shift of resources from defense to other sectors of the economy, we don't know. We do know that toward the end of his reign, Leonid Brezhnev repeatedly called for improvements in the life of the Soviet citizenry. Concerned that too rapid a growth rate for military expenditures would so hamper consumption as to create discontent among the population, Brezhnev asserted in his address at the Twenty-sixth Party Congress that the growth of military research and development had to be slowed.[85]

The economic constraints discussed earlier might have influenced defense allocations. The drop in the growth rate of defense spending might also have been caused by shortages of supplies, energy, and transportation which plagued the machinery and metalworking industries. Or the Soviet defense industry might have been unable to adapt to new military technology.[86] During our research, we saw numerous Soviet articles which were critical of Soviet industry's incorporation of new technology. Another explanation—probably a more likely one—is that several programs had reached the end of their production cycles while the replacement programs, still in research and development, were simply not yet ready to enter production. Whatever its cause, the slowdown fueled Western debate on Soviet military thought and gave increasing support to those who argued that the Soviets had shifted their emphasis to the domestic sector at the expense of the military.

Taken together, the slowdown in the growth of military spending, the steadily deteriorating Soviet economy, and statements by Soviet leaders indicating they were tiring of the arms race increased speculation that Soviet priorities for resource allocation had shifted. There is evidence to support such a view. For example, N.K. Tarasov concluded his statement at the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks in Vienna on 19 July 1979, "The Soviet Union will continue following the policy . . . to ensure that the enormous material means which are now used for the manufacture of arms are switched to the satisfaction of the material and cultural requirements of the people."[87] And Andropov, in his speech to the CPSU Plenum on 22 November 1982, said, "The plan for 1983 attaches much importance to the growth of production and to the improvement of quality of consumer goods."[88]

But other statements, sometimes by the same Soviet officials, indicate that nothing has changed. In October 1982, Brezhnev told a group of 500 generals and officials of the Ministry of Defense, "The Central Committee of the Party is taking measures to ensure that you will never be in need."[89] Additionally, the 11th Five Year Plan, adopted at the Twenty-sixth Party Congress, targeted those branches of heavy industry most closely associated with the military for the greatest growth. Furthermore, CIA data on weapons production and testing, and on construction growth at defense industries and military R&D facilities, pointed to growth in defense spending at historic rates.

Regardless of what the Soviet leadership had intended earlier, the USSR sharply increased military funding in 1983. A DIA estimate shows that in 1983 the rate of real growth in defense spending increased 5–10 percent, compared to a 2 percent increase in 1982.[90] In November 1984, Konstantin Chernenko confirmed the increase in military spending when he called for a strengthening of Soviet defense capability.[91] Finally, on 28 November 1984, TASS reported a 12 percent increase in military spending.[92]

Why did the Soviets reverse the downward trend in military spending? The announced reason was, as a response to the growing aggressiveness of imperialism. No doubt the ongoing rearmament of the US military was and is on the Soviets' minds. Perhaps senior military leaders such as Marshal Ogarkov pressured the Politburo into returning the military to its longstanding position of preeminence in the resource allocation game. Perhaps the imminence of a struggle for succession led to the increase; the Soviet military historically plays an important role during changes of leadership. And, of course, it is possible that nothing ever changed—that the slowdown was merely part of a normal cycle.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Will the September 1984 reassignment of Marshal Ogarkov quell the verbal tug-of-war which has characterized Soviet military policymaking over the past ten years? Only time will tell. But without awaiting an answer, we can draw several conclusions applicable to US foreign and military policy.

Setting aside discussion of why Ogarkov was "fired," one must remember that Ogarkov has provided innovative and effective guidance on the direction required of Soviet military policy in his public statements over the past seven years. Despite the occasional provocativeness of his tone, the substance of his message—except perhaps his continued demand for more, faster—has yet to be disavowed in either military or political circles. In fact, trends in Soviet defense policy and spending throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s largely conforms with Ogarkov's espoused principles. The Soviet leadership appears convinced that the accelerating scientific-technological revolution has caused—and requires—a corresponding revolution in computer assisted weaponry, communications, and command-control systems.

In Ogarkov's eyes, this "high tech" revolution mandated a reappraisal of Soviet military strategy, science, and organizational structure. Ogarkov reasoned that ever-increasing inventories of nuclear weapons had, at last, reached the "point of diminishing returns." Therefore, he intended to shift the emphasis of Soviet research, development, and industrial-military production toward preparations for a protracted conventional war between the superpowers. Public demand throughout the world for US–USSR strategic arms limitations agreements only added fuel to the flames of Ogarkov's logic. Having already implemented a major reorganization oriented toward this concept of war and revitalized the pre-Hiroshima Soviet concept of deep operations, Ogarkov saw only one remaining task. The Soviet Union needed to begin developing and acquiring the requisite weaponry—not only to fight this perceived war most effectively, but also, more importantly, to counter already significant US gains in the same area.

Looking beyond the "firing" of Marshal Ogarkov, then, we conclude that Ogarkov's desired shift in emphasis will indeed be carried out and serve as a legacy from his tenure. It is the most logical course for the Soviets to follow. It is also the most likely, especially considering the inertia inherent in the Soviet policymaking process. Ogarkov gave his policies bureaucratic impetus during his reign by making personnel changes which put "Ogarkov people" not only into key operational roles but also into key policy shaping positions. Those actions started his policies in motion, and inertia should carry them far beyond the succession struggle.

Change comes slowly in the USSR. Doctrinal discussions and decisions traditionally precede actual changes in capabilities by many years. The slow pace of capability change results partly from the sometimes stifling inertia inherent in the Soviet bureaucratic process. In recent years, it also has been a product of a significant slowdown in Soviet economic growth.

The Soviet economy is clearly in trouble, but its ills are not terminal. The rate of economic growth has become very small, about 1 to 2 percent per year, but the economy *is* still growing. The problems are serious enough, however, to keep the growth low or even cause a recession. The Soviet Union needs solid, sustained economic growth (about 5 percent a year) to both fund its massive military budget and provide incremental improvements in its people's standard of living. With the present and projected economic performance, the Soviets cannot do both. They must either get the economy going or make the hard decision on "guns or butter." In the short term (5–7 years), we expect the Soviet leadership to continue the military buildup at the expense of the living standard. In the long term, Soviet leaders must make changes to renew economic growth and provide expanded resources for consumer goods.

The Soviets can restore growth to their economy. They have the required ingredients: a large labor force, natural resources, capital, and a solid industrial base. They must only find a way to put these ingredients together productively.

The Soviets can approach their productivity problem in three ways: through automation, through improved worker/manager performance, or through a combination of the two. They have already begun an experiment to encourage risk taking and to reward innovation and worker performance with bonuses. As stated earlier, only a small fraction of Soviet factories have been modernized to Western standards. Automating factories would not only improve productivity but would also free workers for other jobs. The Soviets will likely work toward full automation, even though doing so will require importing technology from the West. A shortage of hard currency will be eased as the gas pipeline to Western Europe reaches maximum capacity. Further, change in leadership will present an opportunity for fundamental changes in economic policy. We expect a combination of economic reform and factory automation will return the Soviet economy to respectable growth by the early 1990s.

In the meantime, the Soviet military will continue to receive top priority for resources. The Soviet leadership will allocate as much of the resource pie to defense as they think is required to ensure a military strong enough to defend the USSR and to enable the pursuit of Soviet foreign policy objectives. Given the Soviets' strong desire to be recognized as a global power and to maintain a favorable correlation of forces vis-à-vis the West, defense expenditures will have to increase. The shift in emphasis from nuclear to high tech conventional weapons and the evolution in Soviet military doctrine to include the possibility of a major conventional war only add to the need for steadily increasing defense expenditures. As previously stated, DIA estimates place Soviet defense growth at five to ten percent annually since 1983. We anticipate a similar rate of growth throughout the decade.

The gap between supply and demand in the consumer sector will obviously widen as defense spending continues growing faster than the Soviet economy. The Soviet standard of living will therefore stagnate or decline, increasing the frustration of the Soviet people and the pressure on the Soviet leadership to improve economic performance. Some people argue that greater frustration and dissatisfaction among the Soviet people eventually will bring down the Soviet government. This is wishful thinking. The Soviet people, as has been their historical custom, will tighten their belts, suck in their stomachs, fall in line, and wait for a better day. As prominent CIA Soviet analyst Barry Stevenson testified before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on 29 September 1982, "The ability of the Soviets to hunker down and put up with something that is pretty bad for a long, long time is something that is just not part of the Western experience."

A US COURSE OF ACTION

The Soviet Union is one of the world's two superpowers. It is one of the world's most powerful countries economically and probably its strongest militarily. It is the only country in the world capable of destroying the United States and the US way of life. The Soviet Union will not go away, nor can we wish it away. So we must learn to deal with the Soviet Union as it is—as a cosuperpower, not as a second or third rate country.

Once we acknowledge that the Soviet Union is a world power, we should settle on a clear, consistent, long term policy to guide the US-Soviet relationship. Specifically, we should abandon the non-policy we have followed since World War II, of treating the Soviet Union as an orphan child, trying to reward or punish based on our mood and the child's behavior. The degree of reward or punishment has been usually inconsistent and rarely fit to the occasion. As a result, the Soviets have resented us, our allies have worried about our reliability, and our own citizenry has been confused.

It seems to us that it is almost impossible for two of the largest economies in the world to coexist without some degree of contact and relationship. It seems logical, therefore, that the United States should have some sort of consistent policy to guide economic relations with the USSR. Clearly, the United States should not help solve

Soviet economic ills by providing credits or technology to help automate or modernize Soviet industry. Nor should the United States help the Soviets close the qualitative gap in any other field. However, the United States and the Soviet Union could perhaps trade in raw materials, food, agricultural products, or consumer goods. Whatever the US policy, it should be clearly articulated and consistently followed.

The United States should also adopt and follow a consistent defense policy, not engage in a weapon-by-weapon arms race with the Soviet Union. The government should plan for and develop a military capability which guarantees US security across the whole spectrum of conflict and enables the President to implement US foreign policy. Once we identify that capability, we should budget for it, acquire it, and keep it modernized in a relatively stable manner.

As we pursue our desired level of military capability, we should also negotiate with the Soviets on arms control. One reason for negotiating is to keep the US left wing and liberals at bay while the military works to defend the nation. In addition, we might eventually reach an arms control agreement that really leads to reduced tensions, a safer world, and fewer resources required for defense on both sides.

Finally, we must prepare and equip US forces to fight and win a prolonged conventional war with the Soviet Union. More specifically, we should accelerate efforts to develop high technology conventional weaponry. The Soviet Union, long stronger than the US and NATO conventionally, is now turning its emphasis to conventional weapons. Soviet military doctrine now recognizes the possibility of a protracted conventional war with the United States. This doctrinal shift, coupled with the growing antinuclear movement worldwide and the increasing conviction that a US-Soviet nuclear war could destroy the civilized world as we know it, helps to explain the Soviet shift to a conventional emphasis. The stronger both sides become in nuclear weapons, the less likely either is to ever use them. Many people, including Soviet leaders, acknowledge that the United States now has a lead in conventional weapons technology; numerically, however, the United States is at a significant disadvantage. It therefore seems only prudent that we both attempt to close the numerical gap in conventional forces and continue to pursue our most trusted equalizer—technology.

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3

THE NEW SOVIET AIRCRAFT CARRIER

Implications for the United States

by

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At Nikolayev shipyard on the Black Sea, the Soviet navy is constructing its first aircraft carrier designed to operate conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) aircraft. Why does a continental power need nuclear powered aircraft carriers? What capabilities will this ship possess? What does the addition of aircraft carriers to the Soviet navy portend for the US Navy—in peacetime and at war? How many of the carriers will (can) the Soviets build? When will the carriers be operational? Where will they be deployed, and in what manner? What should the United States do? This essay attempts to meld the conventional wisdom available in print on the topic and to derive likely answers to these questions.

THE HISTORICAL SOVIET SEARCH FOR SECURITY

Why would the Soviet Union, a continental power not dependent upon oversea commerce for economic survival, require anything other than coastal defense forces and "survivable" ballistic missile submarines for its national defense? The case for a wide-ranging Soviet navy rests on an understanding of geopolitics and Soviet national strategy. As Zbigniew Brzezinski, former White House National Security Adviser, points out,[1]

- In its history and in its relations with other nations, the Soviet Union is unique.

- Soviet expansionism is born of a sense of territorial insecurity.
- The Soviet Union is, and will remain, a one-dimensional (military) power.
- Because of its one-dimensional power, the Soviet Union will be confined to the essentially negative role of a disrupter of wider and more cooperative international arrangements.
- Western failure both to offset Soviet military power and to cope with crises in the Middle East and Central America could lead to a major disruption of the international system.

Brzezinski argues that the Soviet Union is the political expression of Russian nationalism, and that its uniqueness stems from its society's basically militaristic organization and the "territorial imperative which defines its instinct for survival."[2] This territorial imperative fuels a drive for global preeminence which has become the central energizing impulse in Soviet policy. The result has been, since the mid-1940s, intense competition with the United States; this competition, in turn, has driven the Soviet Union to funnel its assets into essentially one channel—the military. The Soviet Union is, therefore, a one-dimensional world power. It is essentially incapable of sustaining effective global dominance because it lacks other attributes of national power such as an agreeable and viable ideology or a sound economy and attendant financial system. The Soviet Union cannot, therefore, effectively compete with its principal ideological adversary, the United States. As might be predicted by the historical cycle of Soviet expansionism, political insecurity stemming from these circumstances further fuels the nation's desire to increase military strength—which it has done. The Soviets have achieved a global military reach.

Yet, even with a global reach, the Soviet Union is stymied. Proscribed by its one-dimensional power, incapable of competing with the United States as a "complete power," fearing a commitment to live with the status quo, and restrained by nuclear weapons from achieving revolution through central war, the USSR turns to a disruptive strategy to gain its ends. Such a strategy promotes regional conflicts, inhibits wider and more genuinely international cooperation, and opposes what is called "world order" in order to carry on the communist political-ideological revolution, which was buoyed and renewed after World War II. As Brzezinski states,

> The most effective way of pursuing such a strategy of disruption is to achieve and maintain sufficient military power to deter US reactions and to intimidate the friends of the US while encouraging trends hostile to American interests in those particularly strategically vital areas which possess the greater potential for dynamic shift in the global political balance. Today, these areas are, above all, the Middle East and Central America.[3]

A properly configured navy can support the achievement of such goals.

The Requirement for a Soviet Navy

> Each country has specific requirements for sea forces which influence their [the sea forces'] development. For a socialist state this requirement is determined by the tasks of defense.
>
> —Admiral Gorshkov
> *The Sea Power and the State*

If one accepts that the principal goal of the Soviet leaders is maintenance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as the ruling entity of the nation, then survival of the state through the establishment of a worldwide classless society (a "no threat" environment) becomes a major political goal. The most important underlying military mission is defense of the homeland—preservation of the seat of government and of key facilities with their supporting infrastructure—preservation of territory. For the Soviets, this requires an army, air defense forces, strategic missiles, and a navy. As the Soviet Union has gained international stature, the role of the navy has grown from one of strictly coastal defense to one of greater depth and involvement based on the perceived needs of the state.

The tasks inherent in broad naval roles appear in the writing of Admiral Gorshkov. In *The Sea Power and The State,* he emphasizes the universality of modern naval forces and cites their ability to conduct a wide variety of operations: against fleets at sea; against the shore (especially in local wars of aggression waged by "imperialist powers" since World War II); and as one of the most important instruments of the policy of states—"a factor for stabilizing the situation in different areas of the world, promoting the strengthening of peace and friendship between peoples and restraining the aggressive striving of imperialist states."[4] The requirements born of this universality make the modern fleet a "very complex and multifaceted organization," composed of diverse combat forces—submarines (the main strike force), surface multirole fighting ships, naval air forces, shore artillery missile forces with marines, and varied means of supply. The fleet requires proper balance to exhibit "unity of offensive and defensive potential"[5]

Soviet Naval Missions

Despite Admiral Gorshkov's description of the universality of the modern navy and the breadth of its myriad tasks, it still seems clear that the Soviet navy's principal missions in time of war or heightened tension are twofold: to defend the homeland and to protect the ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) force. These missions are not likely to change in the foreseeable future.[6]

Some have referred to this naval component of defense as the "Blue Belt of Defense" concept—a unified military plan for defense against seaborne nuclear attack by strike carriers and SSBNs.[7] The term "Blue Belt of Defense" was first heard on 1 April 1966 in the remarks delivered by Marshal Malinovsky, then Soviet Defense Minister, in his address to the Twenty-third Party Congress; and it was last used publicly in February 1978. The concept, as enunciated then, entailed the centrally controlled use of strategic missiles aimed at US SSBN operating bases and communication sites, long range aviation supplementing Soviet naval air forces to search for both carrier task forces and submarines, national air defense forces in defense against air-breathing threats, and the navy in a dual role of antisurface and antisubmarine warfare.[8] Despite the lack of publicized reference to it over the past six years, the Blue Belt concept seems alive and well, as demonstrated in Soviet exercises designed to coordinate a worldwide simultaneous strike on enemy forces with mass missile attacks to saturate defenses.

Although the missions assigned to naval forces under the Blue Belt concept were good for the 1960s and 1970s, the advent of the cruise missile has changed the equation.[9] The Soviet navy now requires a defense against small, self-propelled air, sea, or subsurface launched missiles. Most worrisome to the Soviets in terms of numbers launched and tactical flexibility appear to be the submarine and air launched cruise missiles, delivered by hard-to-locate platforms and launched from beyond the reach of Soviet air forces that are capable of intercepting and destroying the platform. Failure to intercept and destroy the platform before its missiles launch will greatly complicate the defensive equation, because the alternative is detecting, chasing, and destroying each individual missile on the way to its (unknown) target. This task, essentially an anti-air search and destroy mission, requires speed, mobility, and agility not found in existing Soviet surface vessels or naval aviation. It is one which might be well suited to carrier based aircraft. One might surmise, then, that the "balanced fleet" Admiral Gorshkov seeks would include CTOL carriers for this anti-air (and potentially for a counter antisubmarine warfare) mission, essentially as picket ships for the homeland.

Admiral Gorshkov defines the balance of the Soviet fleet as a condition in which all elements making up the fleet's fighting power are constantly in the most advantageous combination. One may infer from this that Gorshkov is concerned not only with total numbers of ship types in the navy, but also with the relative mix both among the four Soviet fleets (plus flotillas) and within any task forces or units deployed for state purposes. He says that close attention is being paid to ensure achievement of proper balance and, further, that fleet development must be based on a military doctrine (the Blue Belt?) which defines the fleet's role, its place in the system of the armed forces of the state, its tasks in armed struggle, and the purpose of the branches forming it. Thus "a leading place is given in navies to those forces capable of solving important strategic tasks, pursuing the goal of undermining the military-economic potential of an enemy and shattering his nuclear sea power."[10] Up to now, submarines have held this leading place.

But submarines are hard to see, and visibility is a political asset. To function as one of the most important instruments of policy of the state—in the Soviet case, as a facilitator of unrest and inhibitor of international cooperation—the navy not only must be physically seen but also must be perceived as powerful and thus representative of a powerful nation. Recently the Soviet Union has been building a navy capable of accomplishing these political goals as well as the more important wartime "defensive" mission. As examples of naval intervention, since 1967 the Soviet navy has—

- Supported a Soviet client (or clients) against a Western client (Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973).
- Helped a client in confrontation with the United States or other Western powers (the *Pueblo* incident of 1968, the EC–121 incident of 1970, the Jordanian crisis of 1970, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait blockade of 1973).
- Supported a client against a Western country which does not enjoy US support or patronage (the West African patrol of 1970–1971).
- Demonstrated Moscow's support for the domestic authority of a client state (port visits to Somalia in 1969, Sierra Leone in 1971, and Ethiopia in 1979).
- Supported a favored faction in a civil war (Angola in 1976).
- Protected Soviet citizens against an established government (the Ghanaian incident of 1969).
- Provided protection of the country's or a client's assets (sealift of Moroccan troops to Syria and South Yemeni troops in 1972 and 1973, respectively; sealift (and airlift) from the Soviet Union to Syria in 1972; and Angolan crisis deployment in 1975).
- Showed the flag in a crisis by deploying forces in sea or ocean areas.
- Carried out ships visits to selected ports in order to demonstrate both presence and a special relationship to certain littoral states.[11]

This naval diplomacy on the part of the Soviets has cost them little; and in their practice of the art since 1967, they have gained in sophistication while suffering no major setbacks in their coercive efforts. They apparently have studied their objectives well and calculated Western response accurately before acting within the limits of their capability. A natural extension of such coercive naval diplomacy is power projection among Third World nations, and the amphibious activity that has been observed well beyond Soviet shores suggests the Soviets may be building toward such a capability.[12]

The essence of all these missions, successfully performed, is to create for the Soviet Union an air of legitimacy as a superpower. While Admiral Gorshkov denies "mirror imaging" Western fleets, instead favoring a balanced fleet serving the socialist state's "defensive" needs, he nonetheless must appreciate the efficacy of the aircraft carrier task force for establishing national presence in a region. Perhaps the CTOL carrier being built in the Soviet Union is intended as much to impart to Third World nations the perception of worldwide Soviet military (and, by inference, national) power equal to that of the United States as it is to physically defend the homeland. Seen in this light, the aircraft carrier may be considered the key both to accomplishing those military tasks on the "presence" end of the naval mission spectrum and to achieving "balance," not only among the combat vessels of the Soviet fleet but also in the defense policy of the state.[13]

THE NEW CARRIER'S CAPABILITIES

We do not yet know exactly what the Soviets' new aircraft carrier will be able to do or what kind of aircraft mix it will carry. But one can reasonably estimate what its capabilities will be by understanding the Soviet's perceived requirements and the innovations underway in aircraft and missile development and production.

Weapons systems capable of fulfilling the most complex military challenges would seem to be able to accomplish less demanding tasks as well. Of the "defensive" missions assigned to the Soviet fleet, the one potentially most demanding, tactically, appears to be defense against cruise missiles. Whether those missiles are directed against the surface fleet itself, SSBNs in holding areas, or facilities ashore, every aspect of unified warfare is involved in defending against them—intelligence, surveillance, detection, acquisition, tracking, identification, interception, destruction, and reporting—all centrally coordinated. Not only is the overall mission tremendously complex, but also the tactical assignment—finding and destroying cruise missiles—is very difficult.

In the absence of a perfect defensive system, Soviet forces must meet any air breathing seaborne threat at a distance from the shore at or beyond the maximum range of that threat weapon if they are to neutralize the attack. This is particularly true in the case of a cruise missile attack, in which failure to destroy the "mother ship" before it launches its missiles drastically complicates countermissile defensive requirements. Success requires a combination of weapons systems capable of finding, maneuvering to, and destroying the target. The force mix will contain anti-air, antisurface, and antisubmarine assets, and the aircraft carrier will be a vital (if not *the* key part) of the defensive task force.[14] The carrier's aircraft mix, given a potential secondary mission of power projection and presence, will likely include aircraft capable of both fighter and light attack missions.

The Ship

Conjecture abounds regarding the Soviet CTOL aircraft carrier's final configuration. However, consensus appears to anticipate a *Midway*-class size, 65,000 ton displacement, nuclear powered carrier with a capacity for between 40 and 60 aircraft.[15] Because the foredeck is not completed and weapons systems have not been installed, there is some doubt whether the ship will be a strike carrier in the Western tradition, a flight deck cruiser along the lines of the Soviet *Kiev* class ships, or a blend of the two. Any of these configurations would probably suffice in a coastal defense or a control role where adequate shore based aviation support is available; but the Western style carrier provides far greater flexibility in carrier battle group (CVBG) operations beyond the range of shore based air support. The Soviets are known, however, for their evolutionary development of ships, as seen in the *Moskva* and *Kiev* classes of flight deck cruisers: the latter class appears to be an outgrowth of the former; and even among the four ships in the *Kiev* class, evolutionary improvements have been made.

Thus, the new carrier probably will be a uniquely Soviet vessel, suited to the primary mission for which it was designed—defense against long range, air breathing weapons launched from either ships or long range bombers. As such, it probably will be capable of launching and recovering CTOL aircraft, but it will not likely possess the full range of capabilities of US carriers of the same size. Also unlike similar sized US carriers, though, it may embody some of the self-protective mechanisms seen in the *Kiev* class—"surface-to-surface cruise missiles (with reload capability), short range and point defense surface-to-air missiles and a variety of guns"—in addition to its own aircraft.[16] Its complement of aircraft will probably be much closer to 40 than to 60.

The Carrier's Aircraft

Diverse mission requirements—anti-air warfare, antisurface warfare, counter-antisubmarine (or antimaritime patrol aircraft) warfare, and eventual power projection—call for a mix of both fighter and attack aircraft, or dual role aircraft, or a mix of all three. Soviet theorists now state that an aircraft carrier task group "should be equipped not only with 'long range interceptors' but also with 'highly maneuverable' aircraft . . . to conduct 'group aerial engagements with enemy aircraft that have penetrated the first line of defense during mass air raids.'"[17] Soviet aircraft named to date as potential parts of the fleet include a "navalized version of the Su–17 Fitter C,"[18] the MiG–23/27 Flogger, the Su–24 Fencer, the Su–27 Flanker, and the follow-on V/STOL (vertical/short takeoff and landing) aircraft. One not mentioned specifically is the MiG–29 Fulcrum—a single seat, twin engine fighter with a true look-down/shoot-down capability, armed with the AA–X–10 medium range missile for use against low flying aircraft. Comparable to the Unites States' F–16 or F–18, the MiG–29 should prove a highly capable air defense aircraft. The fact that it is still in development favors its being modified or designed for service aboard aircraft carriers.

A likely structuring of the carrier's air assets would entail designation of outer and inner zones of defense—each requiring specific tasks to be accomplished, each with specific aircraft assigned to the mission. The outer zone might be organized to defend against long range bombers and carrier borne aircraft; the inner zone, to defend both against immediate threats to the ship (such as missile patrol boats and attack aircraft) and against maritime patrol aircraft hunting Soviet submarines.

Most of the Soviet aircraft already in production, however, are not well suited to aircraft carrier operations. Although most of those aircraft mentioned above could perform the airborne missions suggested, they might not be able to withstand the rigors of normal carrier flight operations. For example, CTOL aircraft operating from aircraft carriers require an airframe capable of withstanding the tremendous strains of the violent starts and stops associated with catapult takeoffs and arrested landings. The aircraft also need landing gear strong enough to absorb the shock of repeated landings at force levels much greater than those experienced by standard shore based aircraft.

Modification of existing airframes to meet carrier suitability standards is a sizeable and costly undertaking fraught with problems. Carrier suitable aircraft, however, can be used ashore with no greater modification than changing air pressure in the tires. Therefore, it would appear more economical for the Soviets to design and build a carrier suitable aircraft for use both afloat and ashore. By doing so, the Soviets would also achieve economies of scale not attainable in a modification plan.

In such a case, the aircraft emerging as likely candidates to operate aboard the new carrier would be the Su–27 Flanker, the MiG–29 Fulcrum, and a follow-on version of the Yak–36 Forger. Both the Flanker and Fulcrum have been under development for about as long as the carrier. This could be coincidence, or it could indicate that one or both of the aircraft are being developed for shipboard operations. A follow-on version of the Forger would fit the Soviet pattern of naval equipment evolution and would seem a logical application of the lessons learned in the Falklands War about the efficacy of V/STOL aircraft in combat. Also included in the force mix might be electronic warfare aircraft (performing the mission of the US E2C) and search and rescue/antisubmarine warfare (SAR/ASW) helicopters.

NUMBERS AND DEPLOYMENT

How many carriers the Soviets will build ultimately depends upon the requirements to defend the homeland against armed attack. A Soviet planner might require two

CVBGs in the Barents or Norwegian Sea, one or two in the northwest Pacific, and one in the Black Sea or eastern Mediterranean—or a total of five on station. By Western standards, a base of about fifteen carriers would be needed to support the five on station continuously— but the Soviets are not likely to build that number any time soon. It is hard to imagine a Soviet navy hierarchy which has been dominated by submariners for most of its recent history, and which still considers the submarine the main naval weapon, readily yielding to the notion of a long term commitment to building fifteen carriers and the requisite support over the next 15 to 25 years. Instead, a more likely number would be from four to six, for the following reasons:

- The navy, as part of the Blue Belt of Defense, is the outer ring of Soviet defense; its main force is the submarine.

- Other naval forces exist primarily to protect the submarines—especially the SSBNs which provide a nuclear second strike capability—and, in such a role, these other forces (including carriers) are expendable.

- The close-in defense of the homeland affords certain logistical advantages such as shore based air support, short supply lines, and short distances to damage repair and overhaul facilities. (The advantage offered by these short distances is, of course, offset somewhat by having to travel through "enemy" territory, such as in the Baltic and the Sea of Japan, to reach home port.)

- For the Soviets, being *ready* to go to sea is more important than being at sea. The Soviet navy therefore requires fewer assets to accomplish a given mission than does the US Navy, whose view of naval readiness is embodied in a combat-ready crew stationed at sea.

- Because of the factors cited above, the Soviets may be able to accept a ratio of one ship in repair or overhaul for each two or more on station—instead of the converse. This pattern has been observed in the *Kiev* class deployments: of the four units, one is in the Northern Fleet, two in the Pacific Fleet, and one in overhaul. If such a pattern holds, then the Soviets would require a maximum of about eight carriers to meet wartime requirements.

These eight carriers could be distributed for peacetime deployments in support of state interests. Such a distribution might include one each in the Atlantic and Pacific (largely in the Southern Hemisphere), one or two in the Indian Ocean (certainly one in the Persian Gulf region; perhaps another to swing between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, providing presence in the Indonesian straits), and one or two in Mediterranean. This deployment could provide Soviet presence in coastal areas of the Third World almost continuously, though such an occurrence does not seem probable owing largely to a lack of support structure.

Although a total of eight Soviet aircraft carriers may seem logical by Western standards, the Soviets may view their requirements differently. Possible problems with affordability, maintainability, and sustainability (manning, equipping, and operating their carrier) might lead them to develop fewer of the carriers—but still enough to take advantage of economy of scale, meet minimum defense requirements, and show the flag at ports throughout the Third World. In view of these concerns and of the Soviet concept of readiness, a total of four to six of the carriers might serve the Soviets' purposes. Their activities in support of state interests would then necessarily be more limited than those envisioned above.

An interesting consideration for the Soviets before they can deploy their new carriers concerns the Montreux Convention (to which the Soviet Union is a signatory), which prohibits the passage of aircraft carriers through the Dardanelles.[19] How will the Soviets cope with this international legal problem? They can build the carrier, call it a cruiser, and sail it through the straits without its aircraft, which would join it elsewhere. Or they can build the carrier, call it such, stock it with aircraft, and sail it through the straits to challenge the convention. Or they can only partially complete the carrier (leaving it with an incomplete foredeck and no catapults, aircraft, or weapons systems) and sail it elsewhere for completion. Or the Soviets could not take the carrier through the straits at all. The new carrier could become the "USS *Lexington*" of the Soviet fleet, to serve as the principal training aid for Soviet carrier aviators. The Soviets could then train their carrier pilots and develop standing operating procedures in relative secrecy. This course of action would also decrease initial capital outlays for training facilities, although training or refresher facilities would be required eventually in the vicinity of home ports. The Soviets would derive one additional logistic benefit from completing construction of the carrier, or follow-on ships of the class, at either Northern or Pacific facilities: doing so would give experience to those workers who will eventually maintain, overhaul, and modify the vessels.

Regardless of how the Soviets cope with the Montreux Convention, "four to six" appears to be a logical answer to the question, "How many carriers will the Soviets build?"—at least for the next 15 to 20 years. Over that period, the Soviet Union will have had the opportunity to assemble and operate enough CVBGs to be able to assess their contribution to the defense of the state, and to adjust their course accordingly. And, over the same period, technological innovations or a shift in the geostrategic balance—or both—could cast the whole problem of "presence and the carrier task force" in an entirely new light. For the present, and to prepare for the rest of this century, what is the United States to do?

US CHOICES: AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION OR A POUND OF CURE?

Given the growing Soviet search for naval support facilities along the principal sea routes from the Persian Gulf to the West, how is the United States to forestall or deter conflict and promote Western ideals in the same areas?[20] Can the US CVBG of the 1990s meet and defeat the projected Soviet CVBG in a high seas showdown? Most likely, yes.[21] The harder question is, Will there be enough CVBGs to go around? Eventual success will hinge on the ability of the United States to deny the Soviets (either politically or by threat of force) access to the ports and facilities the USSR needs to support its naval effort. As difficult as denial is, reconstituting support for the United States once that support has eroded would be much more difficult. The political maneuvering for advantage will require increased naval presence and a real power projection capability. The United States could produce the former with minimal changes to its present naval forces,[22] the latter, however, would require substantial institutional changes in the way the United States conducts its "defense business."[23]

As a way to increase the United States' ability to maintain naval presence abroad and also provide dedicated tactical air support for Marines in occasional power projection missions, Colonel Charles R. Geiger, US Marine Corps, proposes an amphibious support aircraft carrier (LCV), converted from existing assets. Geiger's program involves converting four smaller carriers (*Midway, Coral Sea, Oriskany,* and *Bon Homme Richard*—the latter two recommissioned) into LCVs; equipping and manning their air wings principally with existing Marine Corps assets, augmented by special purpose Navy aircraft and crews; and operating them either synergistically with CVBGs when long range protection is required, or with amphibious task groups when it is not.

The Geiger proposal has considerable merit, but would involve some "horse trading" among naval forces. Following his plan, he argues,

> will give the Navy 13 deployable CVBGs and 17 decks [LCVs included] by the mid 90s. This is a tradeoff from the currently planned 15 CVBG force of the same time frame. With careful timing, however, the Navy will not fall below 13 active CVBGs at any time in this century and will have a total of 15 decks prior to 1990.[24]

The addition of these four ships would allow deployment of one each, almost continuously, in both the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, thus providing a counterbalance to any Soviet CVBGs in either region. And the ships could be deployed well before any Soviet CVBG arrives, allowing the United States to maintain an edge in the presence sweepstakes. When the LCV, with its amphibious task group, operates in conjunction with a CVBG, the presence should overwhelm the Soviets in the region, deterring their action and thereby facilitating stability.

Although such an arrangement should promote stability *within* the region, it would also contain the seed of wider instability, as is the case in most situations involving opposing military forces. Despite "incidents at sea" agreements, US-Soviet relations at sea have not always been cordial. Incidents in the past have ranged from hostile gestures to actual collisions, and the possibility of hostile actions in the future resulting from blunders, stupidity, or honest accidents on either side cannot be discounted. But unless an incident were a flagrant violation of recognized rules, in the current political climate both sides probably could limit or isolate any incidents and prevent more violent or more widespread conflict.

The wartime advantage of the Geiger proposal is the availability of tactical air support for forcible entry on the flanks of NATO or elsewhere. Under current force structure, the Amphibious Task Force must rely solely on air support either from the CVBG or from land based air—and that support may not always be readily available.

Michael Vlahos, of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, has called for a fundamental restructuring of US defense forces which may subsume the details of the Geiger proposal. Vlahos, to maximize chances for free world survival, would mold US forces into a combined arms army with global mobility to ensure a cohesive American defense not only in Europe but also along the rim of Eurasia.[25] Specifically, he recommends that

> we should reorganize the very shape and concept of our armed forces. Army divisions stationed in the continental United States should be based on the coasts of each ocean and mated with their own tactical air and strategic sealift. . . . To move these new combined-arms mobile armies, squadrons of very fast, very large "RoRo" [roll-on, roll-off] vessels must be procured . . . capable of cruising ocean distances at a constant 30 knots . . . able to load within twelve to eighteen hours. The divisions must be ready to move within thirty-six hours notice. . . .
>
> . . . the United States should maintain at least two airborne/airmobile divisions, with sufficient lift for an entire assault echelon of each division in a single surge. Beyond this quick response, Marine amphibious lift must be expanded so that a full Marine amphibious brigade (MAB) can be kept forward-deployed in both the Atlantic/Mediterranean and the Pacific/Indian oceans.[26]

While Vlahos' argument is laudable, it is not likely to receive immediate support. Fiscal constraints, congressional opposition, and bureaucratic inertia within the

Department of Defense lie athwart the path to progress. Nevertheless, his recommendation provides a structural framework to strive for. The Geiger proposal—a stepping stone on the path to Vlahos' defense structure—appears far more workable. It is cost effective politically as well as fiscally, it supports immediate political objectives, and it would provide obvious results in the near term. By following Geiger's suggestion, the United States could counter the Soviet CVBG threat before it even materializes and inhibit its political effectiveness into the next century.

Soviet ships reveal a great deal about Soviet naval policy—and foreign policy. The new CTOL carrier indicates that the Soviet leadership recognizes the superiority of the US surface fleet and has charted a course to counter it. The Soviet Union will use its growing naval strength anywhere around the globe in order to further its goals.

The United States has the capacity, in the CVBGs it is building for the 1990s, to defeat the Soviet CVBG in combat. But the battles the United States must fight today—political, economic, and ideological ones, set in the nations of the Third World—are no less important; and they require the support that only a strong military, readily deployable and employable, can provide. The United States must ensure that the world continues to perceive it as a friendly and powerful nation, dedicated to the preservation of peace and the principles of freedom and democracy, ready, willing, and able to aid its friends and combat its enemies—anytime, anywhere. Zbigniew Brzezinski has asserted that "failure to both offset Soviet military power and cope with crises in the Middle East and Central America could lead to a major disruption of the international system."[27] For the United States, the military extension of political means that is required to counter the developing Soviet naval threat must be built on a base of maritime power projection capability. It is time now for the United States to begin the organizational changes required to develop that posture and to demonstrate the will to use it.

NOTES

1. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Soviet Union: Her Aims, Problems and Challenges to the West" *Adelphi Paper No. 189*, Part I, 1984, pp. 3–12.

2. Ibid., p. 3.

3. Ibid., p. 10.

4. Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, excerpts from *The Sea Power and the State*, in George Edward Thibault, ed., *The Art and Practice of Military Strategy*, (Washington: National Defense University, 1984), p. 284.

5. John G. Hibbits, "Admiral Gorshkov's Writings: Twenty Years of Naval Thought," quoted in Paul J. Murphy, ed., *Naval Power in Soviet Policy, Studies in Communists Affairs*, vol. 2, 1978, pp. 6–15.

6. For a discussion of Soviet naval missions and tactics, see Norman Polmar and Norman Friedman, "Their Missions and Tactics," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (hereafter referenced as *Proceedings*), October 1982, pp. 35–44.

7. Robert Waring Herrick, "The USSR's 'Blue Belt of Defense' Concept: A Unified Military Plan for Defense Against Seaborne, Nuclear Attack by Strike Carriers and Polaris/Poseidon SSBNs," quoted in Paul J. Murphy, ed., *Naval Power in Soviet Policy, Studies in Communist Affairs*, vol. 2, 1978, pp. 169–178.

8. Ibid., pp. 177–178.

9. See Cynthia A. Roberts, "Soviet Military Policy in Transition," *Current History*, October 1984, p. 346.

10. Gorshkov, excerpts from *The Sea Power and the State*, p. 262.

11. Milan Vego, "Their Operations in the Third World," *Proceedings*, January 1984, p. 54.

12. See Ibid., pp. 54–56.

13. See Dov S. Zakheim, "A Carrier for Admiral Gorshkov," *Naval War College Review*, January-February 1982, pp. 35–39.

14. See Lieutenant Commander F. J. McKearney, USN, "Their Carrier Battle Group," *Proceedings*, December 1982, pp. 73–81.

15. Armin Wetterhahn, "Soviet CTOL Carrier Under Construction," *International Defense Review*, October 1984, pp. 1445–1449.

16. Ibid. For a comparison of US and Soviet aircraft carrier sizes, capacities, and capabilities, see Wetterhahn, p. 1447.

17. B. Rodivnov and N. Novichkov, "Taktika deystviy aviatsii protiv korabley [Aircraft anti-ship tactics]" MS, December 1982, p. 86, as quoted by Charles C. Petersen in "Aircraft Carrier Development in Soviet Theory," *Naval War College Review*, January-February 1984, p. 10.

18. Wetterhahn, "Soviet CTOL Carrier Under Construction," p. 1447.

19. See Scott C. Truver, "Admiral Gorshkov's BBVN?," *Proceedings*, January 1985, pp. 188–120.

20. See Vego, "Their Operations in the Third World," and William J. Taylor, Jr., and Alvin J. Cottrell, "Stability, Political Decay, and Navies," *Orbis*, Fall 1982, p. 580.

21. McKearney, "Their Carrier Battle Group," p. 88.

22. Charles R. Geiger, "Marine Corps Tacair and Strategic Mobility," Center for Advanced Research, Naval War College, March 1983.

23. Michael Vlahos, "Maritime Strategy Versus Continental Commitment?" *Orbis*, Fall 1982, pp. 583–589.

24. Geiger, "Marine Corps Tacair and Strategic Mobility," p. xi.

25. Vlahos' case is based on the following rationale:

> Begin with a basic postulate: the United States needs the geopolitical structure of the free world to survive. This means not only western Europe, but the Middle East and Northwest Asia as well as Africa, Australasia, and the Americas. A second postulate: European/NATO economic resources and military potential equal those of the United States and remain largely untapped. Third: the notion of future Jenas—or even Verduns—on the plains of Europe is a sentimental conceit. The Soviets need European money, technology, and trade too much to seek glory there. Fourth: America's greatest military potential lies in sea power—not simply carrier battle groups, but mobile, amphibious, combined-arms armies, escorted and supported by carrier air power. If these basic recognitions can be accepted, then the imperatives that flow from them direct this nation to reallocate its forces and to reapportion those defense resources available each year to those regional theaters where both the need is greatest and our ability to respond to threats is weakest. If NATO Europe is becoming a less likely candidate for "cockpit of conflict," and if our allies there can afford to spend more on their own defense, then our capabilities at more fragile segments of the arc of containment can be augmented.

See Vlahos, "Maritime Strategy Versus Continental Commitment?" p. 587.

26. Vlahos, "Maritime Strategy Versus Continental Commitment?" p. 588.

27. See Brzezinski, "The Soviet Union: Her Aims, Problems, and Challenges to the West," p. 3.

4

OPERATIONAL ART IN THE US ARMY

New Vigor

by

L. D. Holder

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Three years ago the Army substantially revised its doctrine. Field Manual 100-5, *Operations,* contained some significant changes, a few of which, chiefly deep attack and maneuver based tactics, stimulated a great deal of debate. Yet a less noted change, the addition of the operational level of war* as a separate field of military activity, has generated relatively little discussion, although it certainly represents a distinct departure from the familiar. In fact, the adoption of operational art may be the most important change in Army doctrine since World War II. The Army's response to the change might well determine the force's success in the next war.

If the change in doctrine is to amount to more than a few lines in a field manual, however, Army leaders will have to make some fairly drastic changes in their present views. Senior officers will have to master an important subject that has been neglected for a generation and, as they teach themselves, also educate their juniors. They will all have to overcome an entrenched habit of thinking solely in tactical terms. In short, Army officers will have to recover some 30 years of lost ground to catch up with their rivals. That they will have to do so without the benefit of anyone now in uniform having any experience in the subject only makes the job tougher.

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*The operational level of war is concerned with using military resources to achieve strategic goals in the theater of war.

THE ROOTS OF OPERATIONAL ART

Although operational art gives military historians insights into even the earliest campaigns, its roots as a field of study go back no further than the days of Napoleon Bonaparte. In analyzing the emperor's unprecedented success, General Karl von Clausewitz and Baron Henri de Jomini both discerned a difference between his actions in battle and his actions before and after a battle. They believed that the designing of campaigns, the concentration of large forces before battle, and the techniques of exploiting tactical success differed enough from the conduct of battles to merit separate consideration.

By the close of the nineteenth century, a number of military writers accepted this distinction as useful even if they did not agree on terms. What some called "grand tactics," others referred to as "military strategy" and still others, as "operations." The Prussian War College, following the approach of Clausewitz and the reinforcing work of Count Helmuth von Moltke, made the most systematic studies of the subject and integrated it smoothly into doctrine.

American officers followed Jomini rather than Clausewitz, and the US understanding of the operational level of war showed Jomini's influence even in the middle of the twentieth century. That is not to say, however, that American theory ever really excelled at the operational level.

General Ulysses S. Grant, who came by his operational skills strictly through experience, commented acidly on the book learned "strategy" of his day. In later years, American isolation and the absence of a concrete threat militated against the formulation of a strong operational theory.

Only the Germans and, later, the Russians made a success of operational studies. Although Major General J. F. C. Fuller, B. H. Liddell Hart, and General Charles de Gaulle accurately gauged the possibilities of their period, their own armies failed to recognize their foresight. The men who built functional operational systems in the early twentieth century were soldiers of Germany and the Soviet Union who referred to Clausewitz through Mikhail Tukhachevskiy, Hans von Seeckt, Count Alfred von Schlieffen, and Moltke.

The US Army of the period also recognized the operational level of war as a field of study. Although Americans' understanding of the subject was imperfect, instruction at Army schools in "military strategy" during the 1920s and 1930s did help prepare officers for what was to come.

The Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, approached motorization, armor, and aviation rather tentatively and offered no clear vision of the future. It did, however, ground American officers in the basics of large unit operations, teaching them to think in terms of theaters, strategic objectives, lines and bases of operations, long range reconnaissance and movement, and the differences between open and static warfare.

American leaders worked without a standardized operational concept, such as blitzkrieg, and built an army with no overarching vision in mind. Then as now, however, US soldiers had to prepare for operations under a wider range of conditions than their European counterparts. And their understanding was good enough to permit them to stage large operations in several different theaters with consistent success.

For all practical purposes, the study of operations ended in the US Army after World War II. Perhaps the belief that nuclear weapons meant the end of conventional land warfare was to blame. Whatever the cause, knowledge about large unit operations declined continually, even with the object lessons of Korea before us.

For years, the pool of experienced officers from World War II made up for this lack of study. Now, however, with neither experienced officers nor adequate study, we have become an army of amateurs in one of the most critical military subjects. We have not only neglected to discuss operational art, but have refused even to think about it.

THE STRATEGY-TACTICS LINK

Formally distinguishing operational art from tactics is far more than a semantic exercise. It holds great potential for good if only because it stakes out the ground in a way that will not let us easily run large and small unit operations together or wholly neglect either one. Army doctrine of 1982 defined the operational level of war as the activity concerned with using available military resources to attain strategic ends in a theater of war. As the link between strategy and tactics, it governs the way we design operations to meet strategic ends and the way we actually conduct campaigns.

The subject, therefore, differs clearly from tactics in its scope and perspective. As the discipline dealing with theater forces and campaigns, it encompasses larger geographical areas and longer spans of time than tactics does. Because of the nature of war today, the operational level is inescapably a joint activity when applied to land warfare.

At its upper end, where it connects with strategy, operational art is truly a military art—the fitting of means to the tasks at hand, the analysis of complex situations, and the designation of military objectives which, when secured, will fulfill the needs of strategy. At its lower end, operational art addresses the ways in which campaigns are designed and pursued in a theater—determining when and where to fight, disposing forces in anticipation of battle, and acting to derive the greatest advantage from tactical actions whether or not fighting takes place.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING

As Army planners flesh out the framework of the 1982 *Operations* manual, they need to review a number of the concepts of older US doctrine and of classic theory. The once familiar notions of centers of gravity, culminating points, open and static warfare, "branches" of operational plans, and sequels still seem to apply. All of these need to be updated, but each appears to retain some utility. Similarly, battles, campaigns, and major operations must be reconsidered from the operational perspective.

The form for operational planning in peacetime is well established, and a process exists for providing initial guidance and updating plans once they have been written. Process does not guarantee content, however, and the substance behind the form is unfamiliar to too many Army officers.

Operational planning is somewhat more complex than planning for tactical actions. The standard planning process can be used, and some of the established guides to analysis, such as the estimate of the situation and the principles of war, retain their utility in operational planning. Unlike anything else, however, operational planning involves bridging the gap between strategic and political aims and actual military measures. It also requires a unique flexibility in determining when and where to fight, how to exploit tactical actions, and how to coordinate a wide range of military and nonmilitary actions in pursuit of the theater objective.

Planning at the Theater Level

The need for central direction and full harmony with strategic ends means that the theater commander must lay out a unified operational plan. His theater campaign plan must conform to strategic requirements and provide guidance to ground, air, and sea forces in a clear, effective concept of operations. In most cases, the operational plan will have to win the approval of a coalition rather than a single national authority.

Initial guidance to the theater commander should allocate forces to him, define the logistical support available, identify the enemy, and impose time or space requirements on the operation. This initial guidance should also state the restrictions that will affect his operations. The use of nuclear weapons, the unopposed surrender of specified territory or cities, the avoidance of certain nations' territories, and constraints on aerial bombing typify the curbs that have been put on operations for political or strategic reasons. Given this much and a clear statement of the strategic purpose, the theater commander can translate his orders into an operational plan.

He must decide first *how* the enemy is to be defeated. This fundamental decision leads to the selection of military objectives which, when attained, will actually secure the strategic end. This selection of objectives is vital. If it seems too basic to mention, consider the Army's confusion on this score in Vietnam or recall the temporary loss of direction after the Chinese intervention in Korea.

Theater commanders can choose from a number of options for defeating an enemy. To make the right choices, commanders must understand the environment and the political situation as well as they do the strategic context of operations. Every situation will be different, and false assumptions about what will win can lead to bloody, inconclusive fighting.

The objectives chosen should, therefore, be attainable with the forces at hand, in a reasonable amount of time, and, for military as well as humanitarian reasons, at the smallest possible cost in lives and materiel. Because a protracted war punishes the force unnecessarily and rarely serves strategic ends well, the operational plan should aim for the fastest possible decision.

An effective plan focuses on what Clausewitz called the enemy's centers of gravity. That is, it seeks objectives whose attainment makes the enemy's position untenable either in the entire theater or in a significant part of it. The concept of centers of gravity assists planners in concentrating on narrow, well defined objectives, but it does not solve the problem of discovering what those centers actually are. They may be straightforward terrain or force objectives, such as the control of an industrial region or a capital city or the defeat of a large opposing formation. "Soft" nongeographical aims, though, like physical security or loyalty of a population, are just as likely. Although military measures will always be required, the accompanying civil-military and psychological actions may be decisive in low intensity conflicts.

Planning at the Operational Level

Once the operational commander receives his orders and decides on an objective, he must formulate his concept of operations. As in tactical planning, he must consider every aspect of the situation; at the operational level, however, these considerations tend to be broader. Mission, for example, is stated in general terms and usually requires accomplishment by stages rather than through a single action.

The personalities, strengths, weaknesses, and operational styles of leaders on both sides influence the course of operations markedly and take on great importance in operational planning. Similarly, national differences in doctrine, equipment, organization, and general abilities bear close study in designing a campaign plan.

Separating allies physically or concentrating on one of them has been a common feature of many campaigns. The Soviet practice of focusing operations against the weaker allies of the Germans is one example of how national differences can be exploited. Differences in mobility, firepower, morale, aptitude for certain operations or environments, and willingness to cooperate with troops of other nationalities are further points to consider. Commonly, both sides in a conflict will have allies whose assistance is conditional. (The US Allied Expeditionary Force of World War I, for example, could only be employed as a unit under US command.) All such special conditions offer operational opportunities to opposing commanders.

All forces must also be considered as land-air forces, and a significant enemy capability for air operations must be countered by decisive action early in the campaign. In the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, neutralization of enemy air was a pivotal element in the campaign plans of all combatants.

The terrain of a theater requires analysis that differs from tactical appreciations. Ports, airfields, road nets, drainage patterns, and major physical features such as mountain ranges, desert regions, and marsh areas are the center of such analysis. General George S. Patton, Jr., placed special emphasis on the importance of road networks in operations; he taught his subordinates to fight their tactical actions off the roads, but he recognized the operational necessity of using the roads to concentrate and support his corps. Logistic support is especially important in large force operations. Operational commanders have repeatedly found themselves more constrained by logistics than tactical commanders have been.

OPEN VERSUS STATIC WARFARE

When the theater is large or force densities are low, open warfare, the old form of free-moving corps and armies, may still be practiced. When both sides possess freedom of action, the attacker may seek battle in vain, as Napoleon did in 1812, or may decline battle repeatedly, as General William T. Sherman did in Georgia during the Civil War.

Defenders can also profit from the conditions of open warfare, but they usually have the greater need to bring on battle, if only to stop the attacker. Only rarely can the defender afford to withdraw to great depth. The Russians have suffered through a number of campaigns deep in their country; South Korea survived an extremely deep invasion; in the desert theaters, defenders have surrendered great vacant spaces as part of their campaigns. Those are exceptional cases, though. Normally, such losses of territory are unacceptable and force the defender to fight or lose by default. General Joseph E. Johnston's skillful opposition to General Sherman, for example, netted nothing for the Confederacy and led to General Johnston's replacement.

In a cramped theater of operations or one where force densities are great, operational freedom of action may be harder to come by. In such circumstances, open warfare takes place only when deep defenses can be penetrated and lasts only until the defender can reconcentrate. Static warfare will normally predominate in such theaters. The stalemate in France throughout World War I, the campaign in Italy in World War II, and the stationary battles between Iran and Iraq since 1982 illustrate the nature of such operations. In such circumstances, the great opportunities for quick operational decisions occur early, just after mobilization, and thereafter wait on tactical success.

Although the blitz of 1940 exemplifies the breaking of a potential deadlock, most of the operations of World War II displayed a pattern of alternating static and open warfare. Operations on NATO's central front could take either path. It seems likely that a surprise attack in depth—flawless execution of what is in fact Soviet operational doctrine—would be the only way to avoid a grinding campaign of attrition or a bloody war of movement based on nuclear fires.

For either an attacker or a defender, the concept of operations should embody a flexible approach to theater objectives that emphasizes the strengths of the friendly force, accentuates the enemy's weaknesses, and recognizes the operational conditions in the theater. Speed, surprise, and multiple paths to the objective have characterized the best operational planning. Jomini's old prescription of concentrating the greatest possible strength at the decisive time and place remains a worthwhile goal; the problem of determining where and how is the challenge, as it always has been.

The American experience shows an inconsistent pattern in campaign design. The historical American tendency toward ponderous, broad front efforts (as, for example, in Europe and Vietnam) that risk little and gain correspondingly little has drawn justifiable criticism. Such an approach must be recognized as a luxury available only to a force with great materiel and numerical superiority and in no particular hurry.

We cannot count on those conditions and should therefore stress higher risk, higher payoff planning as we update large unit doctrine and training. The traditions of Lieutenant General Thomas J. ("Stonewall") Jackson, General Sherman, and General Douglas MacArthur are, after all, as much a part of US history as the less focused campaigns so often censured.

THE NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY

The theater concept envisions the ultimate accomplishment of the operational mission, but except in the smallest theaters it can rarely forecast operations beyond the first tactical decisions. The campaign is therefore usually divided into phases. Subordinate commanders receive specific orders for the first phase of a campaign. Beyond that, guidance is rougher. As a minimum, the theater commander's subordinates should understand his concept, their responsibilities in the first phase, the objectives of the force as a whole, and the conditions under which the theater commander will accept battle willingly.

Subordinate commanders also must be prepared for the likely variations on the main theme of the concept. Such variations are part of operational art and are inherent in operating against an active enemy. The elder Moltke described such variations as "branches" from the main plan. In effect, such branches lead to a single end without tying the commander to a single course. They are means of adapting the basic scheme to the specific conditions in the field. A plan with branches permits the commander to fight, decline battle, or fight in a different way than he originally intended.

Most successful commanders have used flexible planning to keep their options open before battle, preserving not only freedom of action but also a choice between several workable courses of action. General Sherman's Georgia campaign, General Grant's operation south of Vicksburg, and General Jackson's Valley campaign illustrate the advantages to be gained from preserving freedom to act and keeping the enemy off balance by threatening several actions at once. In all of these operations the commanders set clear objectives but varied their approaches according to changing circumstances.

Another distinguishing feature of operational art is the exploitation of tactical actions to achieve campaign objectives. Using the results of battle or maneuver can be as important as battle itself. And just as the plan must contain branches to set up tactical action on the best possible terms, so the commander must also anticipate what is likely to follow battle.

Such sequels to tactical action may be nothing more than general ideas of what to do next, given a certain outcome. To be most effective, sequels should be outlined and understood in advance. Specific units and directions should be identified for the most likely lines of pursuit, withdrawal, or defense if the force is to react promptly to opportunity or danger. This contingency planning cannot be exact, nor can it absorb too much attention before a battle. But such plans should exist, if only in rough form, for the force to be prepared for success, failure, or stalemate.

One further Clausewitzian notion needs to be recollected in planning at the operational level. That is the idea of culminating points. Basically, a culminating point is reached when a force on the offensive expends so much of its strength that it ceases to hold a significant advantage over the defender. At that point, the attacker either halts to avoid operating at a disadvantage or goes on and becomes weaker than the defender. Both Napoleon and Adolf Hitler failed to obtain their operational objectives in Russia before reaching their culminating points; both went on to overextension and defeat.

In planning operations, a commander on the offensive must anticipate his own culminating point and adopt a plan that will secure his goal before he loses his superiority over the defender. Conversely, a defending commander tries to bring the attacker to his culminating point rapidly by doing everything possible to disperse, divert, and exhaust the attacker's forces.

Events almost never conform to plans. Once a campaign is under way, its actual course rarely follows expectations. This tendency to change is one of the prime characteristics of all operations; the key to coping with it lies in maintaining a clear objective and modifying the original plan only to gain a clear advantage. General Omar N. Bradley's decision to press on toward Brest, France, after the Normandy breakout provides an example of failure to abandon an outmoded plan. His reaction to the opportunity to entrap German forces in the Falaise Pocket illustrates the need for flexibility that most operations require to be successful.

Essentially, campaigning—conducting the operational movements between tactical actions—is a matter of approximation and constant adjustment. Commanders on each side gauge the enemy's intentions, track his movements, and continually modify their own actions based on conditions that arise and pass with movement and time. Campaigning involves maneuver and fire on a very large scale and extensive logistic and intelligence efforts.

In operational maneuver, opposing commanders try to secure favorable terms of battle by obtaining advantages of position or strength. To do so, they shift directions of movement, change dispositions, probe and feint, throw obstacles in the enemy's path, and, at the best opportunity, mass and commit their forces to battle. In open warfare, operational maneuver may entail movement of the entire force. In static situations, it involves deception, detailed preparations, and rapid concentration of forces just before battle.

During operational maneuver, Napoleon disposed his corps in anticipation of the form of maneuver he intended to use in the coming battle. That idea is still basically sound. But the greater maneuverability of modern forces, and their capabilities for long range surveillance and fires, argue for more flexible, less transparent dispositions today. Operational dispositions, in other words, should not telegraph the commander's intent. The mobility, speed, and reconnaissance capabilities now available should be reflected in plans which leave the commander free to adjust his dispositions until just before battle.

Corps and armies move in formations that allow their rapid commitment to combat. Superficially similar to tactical formations, operational groupings are more complex internally and slower moving. Support units, supply columns, protective batteries, and headquarters accompany large unit movements; airfields, ports, depots, and routes have to be opened and secured behind them. Traffic control, air defense, advance reconnaissance, and route improvement all play important roles in a large force's movement.

TRAINING FOR OPERATIONAL SKILLS

Like their tactical counterparts, operational formations permit the commander to cover ground with the greatest possible speed and security and provide for flexible, effective commitment of forces to combat. The differences, however, are extremely important. Operational planners therefore require special training to plan and supervise the movement of deployed armies and corps.

This sort of training, once common in US military schools, is now entirely missing. Both CGSC and Army War College students in the 1920s and 1930s learned to mass and move armies and corps as a regular part of their curriculums. The Command and General Staff College is back into that practice in a limited way, sending a selected group of students to follow a Civil War campaign. Today's Army War College students, however, visit the Gettysburg battlefield on a day trip; it would be better to put them through the whole course of that campaign, beginning at Fredericksburg, in the roles of opposed army staffs.

Merely moving a large force, say a heavy corps, on a developed road network with good supporting air facilities and adequate supplies requires advanced staff skills. Changing the direction of that movement without losing time, air protection, or mutual support between divisions, or concentrating the force for battle without creating a nuclear target, is the next level of difficulty. Pulling all these actions together so that every unit's potential can be used and all supporting air and naval forces can be brought to bear, in spite of enemy interference, is staff work of the highest order. Yet these skills seem not to be what our schools teach, and they certainly are not what we practice in exercises.

OPERATIONAL FIREPOWER

Operational fires became practical with the advent of military aviation and rocketry. The introduction of nuclear weapons, of course, gave great additional impetus to the idea that fires apart from maneuver could have operational significance. Unfortunately, US theorists, influenced by the premature and complete divorce of the Army and the Air Force, thought almost exclusively in terms of the strategic aspects of aviation and missiles. The Soviets, on the other hand, made the connection between long range fires and operations early and have developed their thought on the subject without interruption.

"Pure" operational fires help set the terms of battle well before opposing forces join for combat. Concentrated against particular areas, facilities, or units, they limit the enemy's use of roads, rails, waterways, and the air; they deprive him of supplies, services, and transport; and they degrade his air forces (and thus his ability to interfere with our own ground and air operations). Operational fires are, in fact, akin to special operations in the way they support the main operation by distracting, weakening, blinding, and slowing the enemy.

In combination, operational maneuver and operational fires have been devastating. The cooperation between General Patton's Third Army and Lieutenant General Elwood R. Quesada's IX Tactical Air Command is a case in point. The Third Army's movement to exploit its tactical success in France made the enemy take to the roads to avoid entrapment. Once on the roads, enemy columns were easy targets for General Quesada's squadrons. The effect of the air campaign in turn prolonged the period of General Patton's operational maneuver.

The battle for air supremacy, then, holds critical importance for theater operations. The Israeli Defense Forces have acted on this principle consistently; the US Air Force understands it clearly. Generally, however, the air campaign requires greater understanding and support from US ground officers on large unit staffs.

THE BATTLE

Battles are the hard points of campaigns, the resolutions that determine the future course of operations. They have a language, but not a logic, of their own. The language is tactics, and the importance of tactics is not diminished by the adoption of operational art. An old truism says that a lost battle cancels all the advantages gained by a good operation. The logic behind battles is the design of the campaign: battles are fought for a purpose.

Battle does not take place at every stage of an operation. By able maneuver, a commander may make his enemy's position so precarious that the enemy must withdraw without fighting. Sun-tzu and General Sherman notwithstanding, though, campaigns are decided by battles in all but the rarest cases. Once forces are in motion, the object of operational art is to bring about battle under the most favorable terms possible, to make the enemy fight at a disadvantage.

The commander who fights only when and where he wants to is clearly a master of operational art. Generally, this prerogative belongs to the attacker, but occasionally strategic conditions allow the defender a choice. Quintus Fabius, Field Marshal Mikhail I. Kutuzov, and Mao Tsetung all conducted defensive campaigns in which they fought selectively.

Occasionally, commanders have to fight under unfavorable terms. Such battles, forced on an unwilling or unprepared commander, obviously put him at a great disadvantage. Such battles may also occur accidentally as encounter battles or as deliberate entrapments. Most rarely, a commander may choose to fight at a tactical disadvantage because his operational responsibilities make it impossible for him to decline battle.

Encounter battles have occurred frequently in modern operations. They naturally conclude operational maneuver and precede decisive battle. In Soviet doctrine, encounter battles hold a place of special importance, particularly in connection with operational maneuver. Nuclear strikes and deep penetrations lead naturally to loss of contact and to a need to respond quickly when opposing forces meet. The Soviet solution is to configure operational forces for effective reconnaissance, fast reaction in any direction, and mutual support between forces during the exploitation of tactical gains. The Soviets' attack from the march is the tactical implementation of this idea. Movement to contact is the closest parallel in US Army doctrine; yet that is rarely practiced above battalion level, and its very presence in the draft version of the corps field manual strikes some officers as curious and impractical.

THE ARMY'S NEED

The US Army finds itself in the closing days of the late blitzkrieg era with new operational vistas about to open and 30 years of lost time to recover. The Army clearly is late in preparing for large unit operations. Even if it is not under the pressure of an immediate threat, the Army has a long way to go in filling the doctrinal void, developing the staff skills, and organizing the force for large operations.

The signs of the Army's steady fixation on the tactical side of war are obvious. The Army has fielded superb organizations and equipment for its preferred kind of fight, but even the best units and materiel reveal a tactical bias and operational inexperience. Although excellent in battlefield skills, Army units and staffs are much less capable in the tasks of getting to the fight in the first place and moving rapidly on to the next.

A number of specific problems come easily to mind. The roles and organizations of corps and armies need clarification. New armored vehicles are optimized for close combat but deficient in the operational virtues of cruising range, fuel economy, and mechanical simplicity. The infantry concentrates exclusively on small unit excellence and cannot articulate its operational role. Air defense and intelligence systems emphasize static, shallow coverage and are not mechanically suited or doctrinally attuned to large scale mobile operations.

Air-ground cooperation has shown improvement since 1982 in response to the tactical aims of deep attack. Although this has been worthwhile, the important theater operational issues remain untouched. Links between ground and air campaigns need reexamination, and the question of control and allocation, a great sacred cow indeed, could benefit from review. Managing air-ground coordination at the highest level of command in every situation simply seems impractical. What works in the scaled down theaters of peacetime will not necessarily provide the flexibility, responsiveness, and coordination necessary in a large campaign.

Combat support and combat service support (CSS) also are inadequate to operational tasks. Generally, CSS units lack the mobility, sustainability,and communications to support operations over extended times and distances. There are plainly too few CSS units in the force to support a solid operational capability; the great tooth-for-tail exchanges gave Army forces a dubious and immobile set of teeth. We should reconsider the idea that support skills are so simple and unimportant that the Army can do without them until mobilization.

Training exercises do not help much. There are some exceptions to the norm, but the usual exercises focus on the battalion and company, leaving large units to administer the tests. The large force exercises that are still held too often cast corps as player-controllers. When large units do have a real participant's role, the exercises take place in areas so small that operational problems rarely surface and the requirements for large scale maneuver, fire planning, reconnaissance, and support are not represented faithfully.

There are useful things large units might do. Continental US corps could run command post exercises over vast areas at small cost, with great benefit to their staffs and commanders. Consider the requirements of organizing a corps movement to contact from Fort Hood, Texas, toward the Gulf Coast. Without a blade or track being turned, the staff could perform some drills that have not been done in the Army since 1940. At the same time, brigades might be called on to plan for road movement over several hundred miles or for doctrinally standard but rarely exercised flank and advanced guard missions. The support planning alone in such an exercise would be highly worthwhile. Deployed forces could do much the same thing. They could make such exercises more interesting by retracing the moves of their wartime predecessors through Germany or Korea to review the difficulties actually confronted and to apply new fixes to the old problems.

In time, the schools will produce the trained staff officers the Army needs. The necessary work is underway now at both the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. The greater challenges will be educating the officers of 20 years' service who will run the Army for another 15 years and bringing doctrine and force structure in line with the nature of contemporary operations. Once these tasks are accomplished, the Army Training and Doctrine Command might profitably expand the scope of large force training by organizing some joint contingency exercises. The latest efforts at forming joint task forces on short notice succeeded, but also left the impression that the Army would benefit from interservice training.

In the short term, the Army's job is plain and not too tough—it needs to catch up on the fundamentals of operational art, relearn its forms, and identify its modern requirements. Army leaders must consider how the organization and make-up of the Army affect its ability to conduct large scale, long term operations. A new generation of professionals must be taught what to expect and how to operate against any enemy who understands and practices a discipline in which US forces have no recent experience.

In the long term, though, the Army must do more than merely come up to par on the neglected subject of operational art. Officers must begin to understand the subject's content well enough to anticipate its future course and prepare the Army to fight in the operational setting of the twenty-first century.

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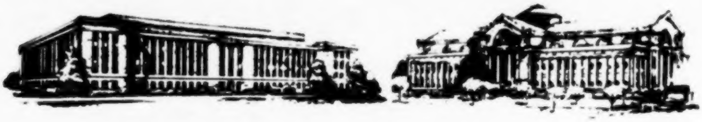

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